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ABSTRACT

These four issues of the CSSEDC Quarterly (Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons) represent the quarterly for 1988. Articles in number 1 include: "Relearning Leadership" (Tom Jones); "The English Coalition Conference" (Robert Denham); "The Reluctant Writer and Word Processing" (James Strickland); "Teacher Aides: An Untapped Resource for Writing" (Kathleen Williams); and "Thoughts on Restructuring Schooling through Leadership" (Jerry Belon). Articles in number 2 include: "Literacy and Language Arts: It's Not Just Our Job Anymore" (Faith Delaney); "Capture the Butterfly" (David Fisher); "The Eloquence of Nil" (Robert Schnelle); "Striking the Same Chord: Reaching a Consensus in Grading Emphases" (Robert Perrin); "A True Job Description: One Reader Writes" (Martha Darter); and "Departmental Aerobics: Stretching Professional Muscles" (Shirley A. Lyster). The articles in numbers 3 and 4 deal with computer labs for English and include: "Word Processing: Changes in the Classroom; Changes in the Writer" (Tony Hughes); "The Writing Lab: Combining Teacher Expertise and Technology" (Susan Benjamin); "Sentence Examination Using the Word Processor" (Wendy Paterson); "Conferencing with Computers" (Neil Cosgrove); "Twenty Questions about the Department Computer Lab" (Nancy Traubitz); "Success with Writer's Workbench" (Kaye Jordan); "Creating a Community of Writers" (David H. Roberts); and "An Experiment with Computers and Composition" (Joyce S. Howe). (SR)

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CSSEDC Quarterly

Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons

Volume 10, No. 1
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Editor: Driek Zirinsky

In This Issue

English Coalition Conference

- **RELEARNING LEADERSHIP**
  Tom Jones represents CSSEDC at the Conference and reports back.
- **THE ENGLISH COALITION CONFERENCE**
  Robert Denham of the MLA learns from high school teachers.

CSSEDC File

- **THE RELUCTANT WRITER AND WORD PROCESSING**
  James Strickland argues that the word processor can make writers of everyone.
- **TEACHER AIDES: AN UNTAPPED RESOURCE FOR WRITING**
  Kathleen Williams proposes the use of aides in the writing classroom.
- **THOUGHTS ON RESTRUCTURING SCHOOLING THROUGH LEADERSHIP**
  Jerry Belon describes leadership for CSSEDC.

CSSEDC News

- **ELECTION RESULTS/APPOINTMENTS**
- **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- **CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS–PLANS FOR FUTURE ISSUES**

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English Coalition Conference

RELEARNING LEADERSHIP

by Tom Jones

I was shocked when Emil Sanzari, chair of the Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons, selected me to represent CSSEDC at the English Coalition Conference,[1] held at the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies at Wye Plantation in Maryland during the summer of 1987. Why would anyone want to hear from someone like me who had no national reputation? I had not written anything of major impact; other than doing some editorial work for a few publishers and making some CSSEDC presentations, I had accomplished little on a national level. After all, I was just a department chair at a small high school in northeastern Pennsylvania. What would I have to contribute that could be of any value?

When the reading list for the conference arrived in May, I experienced further doubt. The list included 37 books and many articles, and I began to feel that, with all that had to be completed by the end of the school term–exams, grades, awards, inventories, ordering, referrals–perhaps I should gracefully decline my appointment. Instead, with the encouragement of my wife and some friends at school, I persevered through those materials, thinking that surely the three weeks at Wye would provide adequate time to finish the reading. (From the list, I particularly recommend *Horace's Compromise* by Theodore Sizer, and *The Shopping Mall High School* by Powell, Farrar, and Cohen.)

I was naive about the spare time, but the English Coalition Conference turned out to be one of the most intense and satisfying educational experiences of my life. The three weeks from my arrival on July 6 were filled with strand meetings, subcommittee meetings, presentations, and general discussions. While the focus of our meetings was on the student and the teaching of English, I came away with a greater understanding of what it is to be an educational leader. Some of my ideas about leadership were reaffirmed; others were new. But clearly, I was in summer school relearning leadership. The sixty individuals gathered in those rather lavish surroundings were all leaders in some way: outstanding classroom teachers, members of commissions or national committees, eminent scholars, department chairs, school district administrators, executive directors of national organizations. All of them exhibited some common leadership traits that apply to all levels of education.

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Leadership Traits

First, each of us possessed a broad knowledge of English as a discipline and of the nature of learning and the learner. Any "leader" should know as much about these areas as possible, instead of thinking that knowing more about management will result in better leadership. We shared a core body of knowledge that helped ground our discussions and enabled us to understand other viewpoints.

As I read the draft position statements each of us had composed before our arrival, I was amazed to find that we shared a common commitment to making the classroom experiences at the elementary, secondary, or college levels the best possible for the students. As the days progressed, I began to understand that all of us, regardless of teaching level, wanted desperately to improve English teaching and to assist our colleagues with some method of doing just that. Leaders will find that their teaching colleagues at all levels share this goal.

It also became clear that excellence in teaching is the best example of leadership. We began to rely on our knowledge of the subject and of research to help make our world real as we considered four areas: changes in schools as viewed historically; specific curriculum issues, such as the issue of whether schools should be learner- or teacher-centered; aspects of the language arts curriculum; and aspects of the media in connection with language arts. What emerged after some frank discussion and soul-searching was a unanimous statement about the importance of the learner-centered classroom at all levels, including college.

Differing Viewpoints

Second, despite some areas of difference, all of us were open to the differing viewpoints of others. While we did not always agree with the ideas expressed by our invited speakers, there was an honest exchange of our individual and collective ideas. We adopted the "sounding board" concept early in the conference. On the first full day, Chester Finn, of the U.S. Department of Education, spoke to us about education reform and assessment. I was furious at some of the ideas he was expressing, but as I looked around the room and saw everyone taking notes, I thought that it was just I who was out of sync with our speaker. But as Dr. Finn fielded questions, I heard others disagreeing but not attempting to denigrate his point of view. E. D. Hirsch, Shirley Brice Heath, Jerome Singer, and others all had the same experience when their presentations ended. In fact, these individuals fully expected to hear differing opinions and were prepared for dialogue. School leaders might foster more open exchange of differing opinions, rather than avoiding aired differences of opinion.

Flexibility

Flexibility was a third leadership characteristic displayed by the conference participants. All of us, at some time or another, had to shift schedules during the conference. The changing nature of our discussions forced the conference planning committee to redraw meeting times and agenda on at least three occasions. Perhaps the most flexible group was the secondary strand, of which I was a member. On the Wednesday before the coalition ended, we presented our report, utilizing various forms of discourse (expository, narrative, and descriptive) to demonstrate our belief that students learn in a variety of ways. As it became apparent that our report was not fully understood, it was withdrawn, expanded to include additional expository material, and then resubmitted for approval. Through such experiences I learned that, for a leader, firmness may be overvalued and that only through some flexibility will progress be achieved.

Everyone present was well organized. In some cases like mine, organization of material onto computer disks and into notebooks was just one way of keeping up with the flow of paper and ideas. What contributes to making all of us good teachers and therefore good leaders is our ability to organize our time as well as our ideas, both in and out of the classroom, although perhaps on occasion we are too well organized and not responsive to circumstances.

Compassion

Finally, every person at the conference was compassionate. Even though we were away from the outside world, as Thoreau might have liked, we were still a microcosm of it. In our time together at Wye, many incidents demonstrated the understanding attitude necessary for leadership. Illness of some members of our group as well as family emergencies underscored the need for leaders to express compassion and concern for colleagues. When my own father-in-law suffered a stroke during the second week of the coalition, daily inquiries about his progress were comforting. This genuine concern came from a sense of community, and I was reminded of the need to do more to create a sense of community among those I presumably "lead."

While I went to the English Coalition Conference because I was selected to represent CSSEDC, I came back with greater understanding of what it means to be a leader. Before I left for Wye, my professional life was in turmoil. I was looking in desperation to change school districts or at least perhaps to resign as department chairman. But at Wye Woods, I found sixty colleagues who poured new spirit into me and rekindled my concept of leadership. Yes, the conference was like summer school, but even more, it was a collegial experience that had great significance for me. As e. e. cummings wrote in his poem, "I thank you God for this most amazing, I who have died am alive today."

Note

1. The Coalition included representatives from NCTE, MLA, and College English Association, and College Language Association, as well as from the Association of Departments of English, and from CSSEDC, CEE, and CCCC.

(Tom Jones is chair of the English Department at Wyoming Valley West High School in Plymouth, Pennsylvania and a member-at-large of the CSSEDC Executive Committee.)

THE ENGLISH COALITION CONFERENCE

by Robert D. Denham

At the English Coalition Conference, held this past summer at the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies on the eastern shore of Maryland,[1] I had the good fortune of being able to join the secondary school discussion group for three weeks of reading, writing, and debate. At first I regretted that I had not been assigned to the college strand, thinking that I would be more at home among my own and more likely, perhaps, to contribute to the discussion and the eventual recommendations. I already knew a good portion of those in the college strand; I knew none of the secondary teachers. But my fear of the unknown, as well as my regret, disappeared quickly once the secondary strand got underway, and I count my time with this group of teachers to have been a genuine learning experience.

Being a part of the secondary strand taught me, first of all, the degree to which our models for teaching language and literature are limited by that segment of the educational world we inhabit. Because I've spent the last thirty years in college or university settings, my modes of thinking about education have been essentially centripetal. It's been difficult, therefore, to distance myself from conventional habits of mind. But reading what the secondary teachers wrote and hearing them talk about solutions to the problems they encounter, about how they view teaching and learning, about their own classroom experiences, and about the often fragmented environment in which they work helped to counter some of my own biases and drew for me a much more complicated and expansive picture of what will be required of English teachers in the late 1980s and beyond.

The Coalition Conference was for me what a classroom should be—one that challenged us, was interactive, caused us to take risks, threatened our usual ways of thinking, and forced us continually to make and remake meaning out of the knowledge and experience of the group. We learned by talking but we also learned by writing, retiring almost every afternoon to pound out some manifesto or critique, to elaborate on what was said in the group, or to tell a story (narratives came to be just as important as exposition in the secondary strand). We'd then photocopy our papers and leave them on a table in the conference headquarters. Subsequent group discussion frequently centered on the writing we'd produced. We doubtless produced too much paper: I returned to New York with at least two reams of my colleagues' writing, which means that we churned out about 60,000 sheets during the three weeks—enough to break every photocopying machine within twenty miles. Still, the writing and rewriting we did, the constant revision our documents underwent, and the use of our own prose, however tentative and incomplete, as material for group discussion turned out to represent a good model for writing instruction. In Maryland we became the kind of learners and writers, I think, that we'd like our students to become.

The Flight from Complexity

An anecdote about one thing I learned will, perhaps, illustrate this. One of our early struggles during the conference was to try to define goals for student learning. After two or three days of talk, I began to sense that we were reducing the issue to something much less complex than it was. During one of our sessions, Janet Emig mentioned in passing the title of an article she was writing, "The Flight from Complexity." The phrase suddenly crystallized some of the anxieties that had been gnawing at me about our discussion, so that afternoon I sat down at the computer and tried to articulate them. I wrote:

> A great deal of our discussion, as we have searched for ways for define goals, seems to me to depend on our having set up a series of oppositions. I've come to sense that this way of defining goals is reductive and based on false dichotomies. In short, I've come to see some of our talk during the past week as a "flight from complexity."
>
> In trying to articulate our commitments, it is natural for us to set them in opposition to something else. This is particularly true of a reform movement. Reform is always reactive: something in recent history or practice needs to be changed, and the new ideas that emerge either reject this history or practice or reshape it in some way.
>
> Both the language and the mode of some of our recent discussion, it seems to me, have tended toward rejecting rather than reshaping the opposing categories and so have reduced the rich complexity of language and learning to something less than it is. In one of the recent documents about goals, for example, we find these oppositions: constructing meaning vs. memorizing facts, making meaning vs. mastering a predetermined body of knowledge, goals defined as experiences students should have vs. goals defined as pieces of information. "Memorizing," "predetermined," and "pieces" load the case against the other set of items in this series of oppositions: we naturally draw back from things that are routine, permanently fixed, disparate, or unconnected. But my point is that such dichotomies are false. It's difficult to see, for example, how either meaning or experience can be dissociated from facts, information, or knowledge. My own experience at the conference is a case in point. What I have come to understand about, say, student-centeted learning is based upon some demographic facts (data about who our students are going to be in the future) and a body of knowledge (what we know about the nature of learning).
>
> The series of oppositions that Shirley Brice Heath summarized at the end of her talk at the conference were also, I believe, false dichotomies. Here are some of the either-or distinctions she used:
>
> academic performance vs. academic knowledge
> primary-source knowledge vs. secondary-source knowledge
> speaking vs. writing
> process vs. product
> synthesis vs. analysis
> students as question-makers vs. students as answer-givers
> research practitioners vs. knowledge receivers
> accounts vs. recounts
> meaning quests vs. label quests
>
> Heath did not actually use the word "versus." Sometimes she said "before," in the sense of "prior to"; sometimes she used "instead of." But in any case, she clearly intended to privilege the first categories in the list and to de-emphasize the second categories.
>
> Any adequate theory of language and learning, I believe, must get beyond a model of dialectical opposition to something more inclusive, holistic, and interactive. Aristotle spoke of the theoretical, practical, and productive sciences—those arts of inquiry having to do, respectively, with knowing, doing, and making. I see no good reason for making one of these "prior to" (pedagogically, chronologically, or philosophically) the other two.
>
> Even the metaphor of the center, as in the expression "student-centered," is restrictive and exclusive, setting everything else (e.g., teachers, knowledge, language) outside the space of privilege. I have benefited this last week from hearing everyone in our group speak with great passion and commitment about who our students are and are going to be, about the richness of their experience as a source for what can occur in the classroom, and about the constructivist philosophy of education. I am a different person for having been part of that discussion, and I'm convinced that I will, therefore, be a better teacher. But it's easy for such expressions as "the primacy of student experience" and student-centered learning" to become shibboleths, and the slogan is fertile ground for parody.

The Either-Or Trap

This little sermon was followed by an account of two writing assignments during my freshman year in college, one that was to come directly from personal experience and one on an assigned historical topic. I tried to argue that, in retrospect, the latter was more important for me than the former. But when the secondary group discussed my paper, I came to understand that, in writing about these assignments, I had fallen into the either-or trap I had been criticizing: my commentary

on my freshman writing assignments depended on a false opposition between primary- and secondary-source knowledge, between romantic and classical modes of thought, between self and society, between sentiment and reason, between things parochial and things universal. I learned something important that morning in the secondary school strand.

One afternoon, toward the end of the conference, Janet Emig asked us to draw our theories of learning. My first impulse was to put a big book in the center of the picture. But my experience in the secondary-school strand prevented my doing this, and I ended up with a drawing that tried to illustrate the complex interrelationships between teachers, students, structures of knowledge, language, and the experiences we have with each other and the natural world. Looking at the other drawings, I sensed that other members of the Coalition Conference had come to reject reductive oppositions and false disjunctions. Once the proceedings of the conference are published, they will reveal, I believe, that the participants did not choose to flee from complexity. That, surely, will be a healthy antidote to what we've been hearing from the chief officers of the Department of Education in recent months.

Note

1. The conference, funded by the Rockefeller, Mellon, and Exxon foundations and the NEH, brought together sixty representatives from eight national English organizations to examine the current state of English studies and to make recommendations for the future.

(Robert D. Denham is Director of English Programs for the Modern Language Association and an ex officio *member of the NCTE Commission on the English Curriculum.)*

CSSEDC File

THE RELUCTANT WRITER AND WORD PROCESSING

by James Strickland

While Boards of Education buy the computer promise and send their administrators and faculty on a search for the "software solution," the greatest resource for a "hi-tech" boost to literacy is being ignored—word processing. A good word processing program is all that is needed to teach writing with computers; this approach can reclaim writers who report that they hate writing, that they find it frustrating, and that they are reluctant to write in high school.

Reluctant writers can become participating writers when they are given access to word processing. Listen to some of my students, college freshmen, discussing word processing in the course of an in-class freewriting exercise focused on their writing histories. Brett writes, "I didn't like writing too much in high school. . . . [Word processing] is great! It's so much easier for me. . . . The more you use it, the easier it gets. . . . You wonder why you never tried it before." Mike writes, "In high school, I did just enough to get by. [Word processing] makes writing easier because you can erase easily or change your mind without having to start a new page." Trish writes, "I dreaded writing in high school. . . . [Word processing] is easier than pen and paper." Rob's reaction to writing in high school, "hated it," is followed by the assertion that word processing has "made writing more enjoyable."

Any resource that can evoke a response as strong as those just mentioned deserves attention. Why is word processing so effective? The students claim it makes writing easy. Christine writes, "I felt writing was busy work in high school. . . . Word processing makes it easier to rewrite. With word processing you can change words around without rewriting the whole paper." "Easy" to students means that it saves time and allows them to fix their writing without retyping. Brian writes, word processing "makes it easier and saves time. There is no writing and typing; it's just typing. And if we make a mistake, it is fixable before we print it." Deana writes, "Working with the word processor makes writing a lot easier. You can erase whatever you want and add things wherever you want to. If you make a mistake, you can fix it and print it over in a matter of two minutes." Kim writes, "Word processing makes it much simpler to change things around and make adjustments without retyping the whole paper. It's made a big difference in last minute changes." Frank writes, "I feel word processing is more effective on papers longer than a page. With these, it is very time saving." Tom writes, "Working on the word processor has made me like writing so much more because you don't have to rewrite your paper everytime you make a mistake." Linda writes, "Word processing makes it easier to write papers since you can easily go back and correct mistakes and change the paper."

Writing Attitude Changes

It is obvious that a word processing program allows students to become active writers, but the charge is made that the computer is nothing more than an electronic typewriter. The students answer the charge when they write about the affective changes in their writing. Brad writes, "Working on a word processor makes writing . . . more exciting; therefore, it has prompted me to write more." Aaron writes, "It is fun to use and I enjoy doing my assignments on it." Another student, Valerie, writes about a change in her perception, "Writing with a word processor is useful at times; you can actually see your writing." To me, the most convincing argument that word processing does more than function as an electronic typewriter is offered by Judy. She writes, "I enjoy writing with the word processor because I am able to sit at the computer and try out different ideas in many different places of my writing." Word processing encourages risk taking.

Of course, word processing is not perfect. The two biggest complaints heard from students are that it is inconvenient and that writers now need keyboard skills. Trish writes, "It was such an inconvenience to get to the computer room," while Bill writes, "I'd rather write in pen because I'm slow on punching the keys." Joe, the student who produced the largest volume of text in his electronic journal, writes the puzzling comment, "Working with the computer has made me not want to write as much, only because it takes too long to type it in, since I am a poor typist."

Some the students' initial experiences will be as irritating as those of Sandi: "In a way, it does make everything so much easier, if you know what you're doing. But for us unfortunate people who don't know how to use them, it can be very irritating and time consuming." But eventually, more of them will soon agree with Lori: "At first, I hated [word processing] because I didn't know how to properly use the computer. Now, I like it very much because using the computer is a lot of fun and making corrections is a lot easier."

My sense of things is that reluctant writers do become writers through the act of writing, a change that word processing encourages. Others may still feel that the act of writing, in itself, is not enough to improve one's skill at writing. They search for more software, more computer-assisted instruction. Yet, word processing can also deliver instruction, providing

individualized instruction through lesson files created by the instructor and read by the student like other text files.

The lesson files contain prompts to writing, teaching a myriad of skills—paragraphing, prewriting, editing—and suggesting a variety of writing tasks. For example, many teachers assign some form of the autobiographical essay. This can become a computer-assisted lesson.

Sample Lessons

One of my graduate students, Rebecca Laubach, a ninth- and tenth-grade teacher at Mars High School in Mars, Pennsylvania, created a lesson file called "Memory" with no programming knowledge and nothing more than a word processing program. When one of our students loads the file, here is what appears on the screen:

Screen 1 Memory

THIS IS YOUR LIFE

_____

(Type your name here)

AS YOU MOVE THROUGH THIS LESSON TRY TO CENTER EACH SET OF DIRECTIONS ON THE SCREEN SO THAT YOU SEE ONLY ONE SET OF DIRECTIONS OR ACTIVITIES AT A TIME.

Screen 2

Everyone has unforgettable memories from childhood. These memories come from experiences at school, vacations with our families, time spent with friends, or just every day life. In this lesson, you are going to write about events from your past.

Screen 3

In the spaces provided below, complete as many of the following sentences as you can.

1. The things that frightened me as a child were . . .
2. I got into trouble when . . .
3. My childhood was unusual because . . .
4. My confidence showed when . . .
5. When I was young I admired . . .
6. My happiest memory is . . .
7. My saddest memory is . . .

When you've done as many as you can, move on.

Screen 4

Now you are going to expand one of the sentences you wrote into a paragraph. Choose any sentence you want and retype it below.

Begin typing here →

Screen 5

Now, in a few more sentences, explain what you said. You can give two or three short examples that illustrate your point, or you can tell one long story. Start typing at the end of the sentence you typed in above this paragraph.

When you are finished move on to the next screen.

Screen 6

Now that you have something written, you might want to revise it. Go back and reread the paragraph you have just written. While you are reading, you might ask yourself these questions. Does my paragraph clearly express the idea I had in mind? Could someone who doesn't know me understand what I am saying and why I am saying it? If not, you may want to make some changes.

Be sure to save this file and get a printout.
End of "Memory".

Again, I'll let my students tell you about lesson files. Michelle writes, "The lesson files were okay. I think the two with the autobiographical entries helped because I was lost for an idea." Lori writes that lesson files "helped me to expand my thoughts. . . . [they] helped me to think more clearly and understand what you wanted." A full treatment of lesson files can be found in Dawn and Ray Rodrigues's *Teaching Writing with a Word Processor, Grades 7-13*, an ERIC/NCTE TRIP booklet.

Forget the software with bells and whistles; disregard the drills and skills software; negotiate computer lab time away from the math classes. Get students writing with word processing, running "user-friendly" programs such as Bank Street Writer, Appleworks, Word Perfect, or PC-Write, and reluctant writers will become eager writers.

(James Strickland teaches English at Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania, and will begin his editorship of CSSEDC Quarterly *in May 1988.)*

TEACHER AIDES: AN UNTAPPED RESOURCE FOR WRITING

by Kathleen Williams

While most secondary school English teachers recognize the importance of teaching the writing process through daily writing and conferencing, typical class loads (often five or six classes consisting of over 100 students) do not allow them time to conference and work through an entire writing piece with every student. Teacher aides, however, are a valuable, though seldom used, resource in these classrooms. Although teacher aides are often seen as little more than clerical assistants or monitors, in truth, these people are talented, bright, paraprofessionals who understand and enjoy working with students. Teacher aides, with proper training and planning, can be a valuable asset in the writing classroom. At State University College of New York at Buffalo, for example, a program to help

teacher aides toward a B.A. has been in place for two years. The Buffalo schools agreed to put aides on the payroll and the college, in turn, provided courses to train them.

Teacher Aides in the Classroom

To prepare aides for the English classroom, the agenda for a writing-tutor training program should be well founded in the process approach to the teaching of writing. The first place where an aide's individual attention would be invaluable is at the initial "ideas to print" step of the writing process. During this first stage of writing, an aide in the classroom could help students through brainstorming, questioning, and discussing the topics for the students' papers. As their writing progresses, the students could conference with the aide on an individual basis, and the aide could also be available for comment and feedback during the revision stage of writing.

Identification of Interested Aides

A writing-tutor training program would not be appropriate for all teacher aides in the secondary schools. A questionnaire addressing interest and potential expertise could be used to assess interest in such a project among English staff and aides in one or more schools. Such a questionnaire should be completed only after an initial meeting of all English teachers and aides, and it should explain in detail the rationale for such a training program. A workshop format might benefit those who express interest but who are not able to commit a large block of time to the training.

Interest in the area of writing is, of course, the primary factor needed to identify those aides who would be willing to undergo training. The participants should be well aware of the time and effort it takes to learn and feel comfortable with conferencing techniques, and they should be willing to enter into the experience with an open mind about the teaching of writing.

The aides should be made aware that they will be free to resume their previous duties if, after their training, they feel uncomfortable about the basic philosophies expressed in the program, if they feel that the experience will not be a positive one for them, or if they are found unsuited to the program.

Proposed Program Formats

Although it would be ideal for secondary school administrators to work with an area college in setting up such a program, other avenues are open for training aides to work in cooperation with the English teacher in order to encourage and facilitate successful writing programs. Such training must have the support and cooperation of both the administration and the classroom teacher. Although the classroom teacher would serve as supervisor, the purpose of such a program must be to establish a working team that is recognized as such by the students. Basic philosophies must be both similar and compatible, and goals and objectives must be clearly established and followed through to their completion.

The administration must agree to provide training for the aides during school hours, perhaps in cooperation with a university, or the aides should be compensated for the time they spend in training. This agreement on the part of the administration demonstrates its commitment to the program. Training can be accomplished in a variety of ways, depending on available resources. A program that results in the granting of a degree is one alternative, but providing courses in the methods of teaching writing through continuing education programs is another possibility. Working with outside consultants can also provide training for aides and serve as a stimulus for renewing the motivation of the classroom teacher. This is especially true if the teachers are consulted about possible facilitators.

Conclusion

The paperwork load for the English teacher makes difficult both frequent writing and conferencing. Therefore, teacher aides can be a valuable resource as writing tutors. Through proper training, these aides can work with the English teacher, providing the students with more individual attention through team effort. As a result of this assistance, more writing can take place, and student progress can be monitored more closely. School systems should carefully consider using teacher aides to facilitate student writing; teacher aides are definitely a valuable resource.

(Kathleen Williams is the assistant director of the Academic Skills Center at the State University College of New York at Buffalo. Before assuming this position, she taught reading in Buffalo area high schools.)

THOUGHTS ON RESTRUCTURING SCHOOLING THROUGH LEADERSHIP[1]

by Jerry Belon

The first "Wave of Reform" emphasized teacher and school accountability through state mandates, merit pay programs, and increased attention to testing. The second wave has focused on teacher preparation programs (Carnegie Commission and Holmes Group reports) and recommended new school structures such as lead teachers, peer coaching, and mentoring.

The next reform movement will be at the classroom level. There will be a greater emphasis on professionalizing teachers and teaching. If we are to have real reform that will have a positive effect on teaching and learning, we will need to focus our efforts on renewing people, not structures. In order to do this we need to develop a spirit of renewal in ourselves and our colleagues, for without renewal there can be no excellence. We will have to overcome the attitudes of those who have lost their own capacity for renewal.

Transformational leaders are needed both within and outside of the classroom. They are leaders whose major purpose is to help others reach their full potential. Transformational teachers and administrators go to work each day with the belief that they can make a difference, that somehow they can help others to reach their potential, and that when this is accomplished their schools will become excellent. The driving force for transformational leadership is tough-minded optimism.

Empowerment is necessary if we are to have positive reform in classrooms and schools. However, it is more than sharing power. True empowerment is based on the belief that others are capable of and able to fulfill important roles in the organization. This results in improved roles and status. It is important to understand that only those who are transformational leaders can truly empower others.

Transformational leaders share several characteristics. These characteristics include having a commitment to systematic renewal, holding high expectations for their own behavior, modeling the behavior they expect of others, and having a positive self-regard. When transformational teachers empower students because they feel that they have been empowered, classrooms and schools can become centers of excellence.

Note

1. This article is excerpted from "Challenges and Expecta-

tions," a speech delivered to CSSEDC on November 24, 1987, during the annual convention in Los Angeles.

(Jerry Belon is a professor of curriculum and instruction at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.)

CSSEDC News

ELECTION RESULTS/APPOINTMENTS

Elected members-at-large to the CSSEDC Executive Committee in Los Angeles during the CSSEDC Annual Meeting were the following: Judith Kelly, Department Chair, Hine Junior High School, Washington, DC; and Kevin McHugh, Department Chair, Finneytown Junior and Senior High School, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Appointed editor of the *CSSEDC Quarterly* for a three-year term beginning Fall 1988 was: James Strickland, English Department, Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania 16057-1326.

Appointed chair of the CSSEDC Nominations Committee for 1988 was: Mary-Sue Gardetto, Department Chair, Ankeney Junior High School, Beavercreek, Ohio. Nominations for associate chair and for members-at-large should be sent to Mary-Sue Gardetto, 2491 Clubside Drive, Dayton, Ohio 45431.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upcoming conferences of interest to department chairs:

- CSSEDC at NCTE Spring Conference in Boston, March 23-26, 1988. Two programs of special note: Tom Jones will discuss implications of the English Coalition Conference for the English curriculum, teaching and teacher education; Bonnie Genrich will present a new "outcomes-based" English program and its ramifications for instruction and curriculum design.
- 1988 International Humor Conference, April 1-4, Purdue University. Contact: Victor Raskin, Chair, Linguistics Program, Heavilon Hall, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana 47907, 313/743-3094.
- 6th Annual Conference on Writing Assessment, April 15-17, 1988, Radisson University Hotel, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Contact: Leslie A. Denny, Conference Services, 220 Nolte Center, 315 Pillsbury Drive SE, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455.

Attending the NCTE Spring Conference in Boston, March 23-26?

Then come to CSSEDC's BOSTON TEA PARTY Friday, March 25, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Marriott Copley Place
Grand Ballroom
Salons ABCD
Fourth Floor

Stop by the CSSEDC information table in the book exhibits and pick up your invitation to the party. At the BOSTON TEA PARTY, meet other English department leaders from throughout the country and have complimentary drinks and hors d'oeuvres. See you there!

CSSEDC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jim Strickland, a member of the English Department at Slippery Rock State University in Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania, has been appointed Editor of the *CSSEDC Quarterly*, beginning with the October, 1988 issue. He replaces Driek Zirinsky, Associate Professor of English at Boise State University, Boise, Idaho, who has held the position since 1984.

NEH SUMMER SEMINARS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Fifty-three summer seminars for secondary school teachers are offered by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Acceptance at one of the seminars carries with it a stipend and expenses for travel and housing. Although the deadline for applying is March 1, 1988, there is still time to apply. To get a copy of the guidelines and an application form, write:

National Endowment for the Humanities
Division of Fellowships and Seminars
Room 316
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20506

Or, phone Rick Emerson at 202/786-0463. These fine opportunities for teachers and chairs are worth looking into!

CALL FOR VIDEOTAPES

NCTE is interested in reviewing videotapes for preservice and inservice training of teachers of English and the language arts, K-16, with an eye towards making such materials more widely available to the profession. If your school district or college has produced a videotape which you feel is excellent, our review committee would like to see it. The videotape must have been produced by noncommercial, nonprofit organizations. Content should be pedagogical—e.g., how to teach some aspect of writing, language, or literature—not instructional material for students, such as videotapes about Shakespeare, propaganda analysis, and so on. Please send a review copy of each videotape, preferably in cassette form, and any accompanying promotional materials to Dr. Allan Dittmer, Chair, NCTE Committee to Review Videotapes for Inservice Materials, c/o Department of Secondary Education, School of Education, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky 40292. Videotapes submitted will be returned after review by the committee.

It is the policy of NCTE in its journals and other publications to provide a forum for the open discussion of ideas concerning the content and the teaching of English and the language arts. Publicity accorded to any particular point of view does not imply endorsement by the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or the membership at large, except in announcements of policy where such endorsement is clearly specified.

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CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS— PLANS FOR FUTURE ISSUES

The *CSSEDC Quarterly*, a publication of the Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons of NCTE, seeks articles of 250-3000 words on topics of interest to English department leaders. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are encouraged. Recent surveys of our readers reveal these topics to be of interest: encouraging leadership within the department, evaluating teachers and curriculum, and implementing change. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In addition, upcoming issues will have these themes:

October 1988
(July 1 deadline): "Computer Labs for English"

December 1988
(September 15 deadline): "Professional Development Days"

February 1989
(November 1 deadline): "High School-College Articulation"

May 1989
(February 1 deadline): "Research in the Classroom"

Address articles and inquiries to: James Strickland, Editor, *CSSEDC Quarterly*, English Department, Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania, 16057-1326.

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CSSEDC Quarterly

Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons

Volume 10, No. 2
May 1988
Editor: Driek Zirinsky

In This Issue

Responding to Public Pressure

- **LITERACY AND LANGUAGE ARTS: IT'S NOT JUST OUR JOB ANYMORE**
  Faith Delaney argues that literacy is everybody's responsibility.
- **CAPTURE THE BUTTERFLY**
  Prepare for the media, cautions David Fisher.

CSSEDC File

- **THE ELOQUENCE OF NIL**
  Robert Schnelle bemoans the unbearable weight of words and proposes a National Honesty in Language Week.
- **STRIKING THE SAME CHORD: REACHING A CONSENSUS IN GRADING EMPHASES**
  Robert Perrin plans for departmental consensus in evaluating writing.
- **A TRUE JOB DESCRIPTION: ONE READER WRITES**
  Martha Darter exposes at least one department chair's true job description.
- **DEPARTMENTAL AEROBICS: STRETCHING PROFESSIONAL MUSCLES**
  Seventeen ways to stretch a department, according to Shirley A. Lyster.
- **THE CSSEDC POSITION STATEMENT ON THE ROLE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL DEPARTMENT CHAIRS**

CSSEDC News

- **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Responding to Public Pressure

LITERACY AND LANGUAGE ARTS: IT'S NOT JUST OUR JOB ANYMORE

by Faith N. Delaney

A concerned parent recently sent a copy of a newspaper article to the central office of my school district, decrying the increasingly serious problem of illiteracy in America. It was forwarded to me as language arts coordinator with the clear implication to "do something about it." When I showed the article to my colleagues in mathematics, science, and social studies, they joked about being relieved that the responsibility for the state of students' reading and writing competence is still regarded as the task of the English teacher alone.

In an increasingly complex technological society where a variety of types of literacy are needed, it is clear that those of us who teach language arts cannot be the only ones held accountable for children's ability to comprehend the written word. The charge of making our students literate must be shared by all academic disciplines and supported by the family and community, as well.

Within the last year, a number of studies have focused on the continuing problem of illiteracy and its educational and economic impact on American society. The National Assessment of Educational Progress in its Report Card released in March, 1987, entitled "Learning to Be Literate in America," focused on the growing problem faced by major corporations who must hire and then train workers to read and write to a degree where they can function effectively in the business world.

As the amount of printed data that must be read, absorbed, and acted upon increases, the level of literacy necessary for minimal competence also increases. In addition, it is clear that the very nature of literacy varies greatly in accordance with the type of discourse, the author's purpose, and the targeted audience. The experiential background, mind set, and previous body of knowledge are all factors which significantly influence a person's ability to read.

What Is Literacy?

An individual may well be visually literate—able to gain information from diagrams or maps, yet be unable to critically read a novel or recognize subtle techniques of persuasion. Still other learners may readily demonstrate computer literacy or be able to follow printed directions to assemble a toy or bicycle, while

being completely mystified by a written explanation of the new tax codes.

There are readers who can decode blueprints to construct a building who would be overwhelmed if asked to summarize the key points in a chapter of a high school physics text. All are literate in specialized ways, yet deficient in other aspects of the term.

The N.A.E.P. report also contains a litany of depressing, but hardly surprising statistics, which characterize young adults as sadly lacking in their ability to "find, understand, summarize, and explain relatively complicated information." Higher level skills such as analyzing and synthesizing are even more deficient. Students in minority groups achieve still lower levels of reading and writing performance, a conclusion supported by the N.A.E.P.'s earlier reports, "Literacy: Profiles of America's Young Adults" and "The Writing Report Card: Writing Achievement in American Schools" (N.A.E.P., 1986).

This substantially lower performance of Black and Hispanic young people has led researchers to consider factors beyond classroom instruction. Two key influences are the educational level of the parents and the kind and amount of reading material in the home. The value placed on reading and writing by parents and communicated to children is bound to influence student achievement in these areas (N.A.E.P., 1987).

Teachers, too, of course, transmit their attitudes to their pupils. The classroom teacher who enjoys reading aloud, who guides children to select books which reflect their interests, and designs book report assignments which are stimulating and creative cannot help but convey a personal philosophy that reading is important, worthwhile, and enjoyable.

Teachers who write while their classes are writing and who plan ways to make writing real—letters to newspapers, political leaders, or pen pals; class anthologies and magazines and writing bulletin boards; a visit from a well-known author of children's literature—communicate a sense that writing is valued and worth doing well.

Who Should "Teach" Literacy?

But what of the language arts teacher? Are we the only ones who should worry about "doing something" about literacy? How are we to make books more appealing than television and writing letters as much fun as talking on the telephone? Where does our responsibility end and that of the parents take over? These are not easily answered questions for there are no simple solutions. Educators must first acknowledge and then address the outside factors of electronic media, poor home environment, the desire for instant gratification, and a barrage of jargon from government, advertising, and business that is the antithesis of high-quality writing.

We must first examine ourselves. Do we value reading and writing? What kind and level of literacy should we demand of ourselves as educators? Is it unreasonable to expect teachers to consult book reviews and regularly read national papers and weekly news magazines? How much and how often should teachers be expected to write? What should the standard of writing quality be for administrative memos and curriculum reports?

The teacher of language arts does have a vested interest in sharing the commitment to increase the reading and writing abilities of students with teachers in the other content areas. Social studies, particularly, can teach students high-level reading skills that are not traditionally the province of the language arts curriculum. It is in social studies that students are first exposed to nonfiction material and are asked to read analytically, draw conclusions, and predict outcomes.

In the middle elementary grades, reading instruction is still primarily focused on skill development rather than interpretation and critical evaluation. Science and social studies are generally the first subjects for which students must "study" and thus are the best areas for teaching the skills of guided study techniques such as S-Q-3R. The ability to gain information from nonprint media—photographs, maps, charts, graphs, and video presentations—also are integral parts of these content-area subjects.

Language Arts Can Take the Lead

Language arts teachers can share their expertise with other staff members through in-service training and increase the awareness of the administration that literacy—when defined as the teaching of reading, writing, thinking, and speaking—is clearly a responsibility shared by all teachers in all subject areas.

Equally important is communicating with parents regarding the importance of the home environment. Parents need to instill a love of learning in their children by teaching them to value reading and writing. Parents should be encouraged to read aloud to their children and to give books as gifts. The completion of homework needs to be a priority which supersedes television viewing and shopping trips. Family vacations should not be scheduled when school is in session. Books, newspapers, and magazines should be plentiful in the home, and children need to see their parents reading. Writing can be fostered by letters to relatives, thank-you notes, and journals kept to record impressions of family trips.

The improvement of literacy, clearly, is a multifaceted problem which requires combined efforts of school staff and administration, parents and community members, and business and political leaders in order to bring about significant change. Language arts teachers simply cannot fight alone or bear the sole responsibility for remedying a national problem of epic proportions. "Do something about it!" Indeed, we have been and will continue to do so, but we will not succeed without a commitment from the entire educational system and from society as a whole.

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(Faith N. Delaney is Language Arts Supervisor for the West Milford Township School District in New Jersey.)

CAPTURE THE BUTTERFLY

by David Fisher

One of the new experiences being president [of the British Columbia English Teachers' Association] has brought me is contact with the media. I can't say I've been favorably impressed with the results. None of the members of the media I've dealt with has misrepresented me (although a television reporter was clearly

trying to direct me toward the sensational); yet the resultant stories have seemed some distance from what I meant.

For example, Francis Bula, the education writer for *The Sun*, phoned me last Sunday at 21:30 for my comments on the illiteracy series her paper had run the week before. In the half hour I gave her, I provided at least ten factors contributing to increasing illiteracy and a few policies that, if implemented, would reduce illiteracy, and then I pursued the idea that there might not be an illiteracy problem after all. In her column the next day, Bula quoted me as saying that English teachers are beginning to read to their students, even at the senior high level, and that English classes contain too many students.

I don't dispute that I said that; I do have a few quibbles about what she chose to print from a half-hour conversation. Neither do I think she was hostile; in fact, she was quite sympathetic, both in the interview and in her column.

It's more that I now realize that dealing with the media is like teaching children: we provide them with simple truths, a phrase that rings with paradox. In teaching, we try to get the essence of what is important, to pare away the skin to get to the flesh, and to eliminate the interference that flashes on the screen of understanding.

Yet we know that if we are too reductionist, if our attempt at truth is too simple, the integrity of the idea is gone, and what remains is flat dogma. Reduce "Defender of the Faith" or *Lord of the Flies* to prescriptive themes created by the teacher, and the works are dead. We want to avoid giving the student such a narrow view and, at the same time, to focus the work enough to put it within reach. We want to ensure that the work remains alive, perplexing and yet engaging.

So the next time the media call, I'll ask what they want, tell them I'm busy for twenty minutes, and call back with two paragraphs of simple truth. Let's hope I can pin that butterfly before it flies off again.

(David Fisher is President, British Columbia English Teachers' Association)

CSSEDC File

THE ELOQUENCE OF NIL

by Robert Schnelle

My problem begins with an old man who wants to die quietly. Just as he's riding off to the desert, though, an inquirer bridles his pony. Against his better judgment, the old man agrees to record what eighty years have taught him.

"Those who talk don't know; those who know don't talk," writes the fifth century B.C. philosopher, Lao Tzu, prevented from taking his own advice at the last. Legend has it that he breaks his silence at the pleading of a guard as he's passing through the gate of a city in western China. The result is *Tao Te Ching*, or *The Way and Its Power*, by far the tersest of scriptures associated with a world religion, but one written by a man for whom language itself had come to verge on the heretical.

English teachers might claim Lao Tzu's dilemma for their own. Most care enough for words to value reticence. We applaud the writer who keeps it tight. Like shipwrights, we learn to gauge a boat's worth by what doesn't seep through the lapstrakes. We watch the space around forms in paintings by O'Keefe. Preferring ploughman's lunch to Thanksgiving, the teacher reads essays with an eye to what's not there.

After five years of teaching, though, I feel I should love words and words. I read a surfeit of them, ninety themes at a crack. When I read parroted corporatespeak, I can't say that I love words at all: "Each and every one of these impactful aspects are then accessed by appropriate personnel." When I hear words wasted I get the impression that breath is limitless: "There are many challenges we face—challenges that face democracy in the years to come." Am I doing right to teach a trust in language when nine-tenths of that in use is specious? Are there instances when a tied tongue is the better alternative?

Teach 'em to know the enemy, says Ken Macrorie, who calls windy talk "Engfish." I had taken up this monicker in class till one day a crewcut boy turned the tables. "Mr. Schnelle," he said, "you're using Engfish." *Interpretation* being the word in question, Crewcut must have supposed Engfish to comprise the body of words unfamiliar to him personally. A mistake easily made and forgiven.

Then is it language with waffles and sogs which makes me envy the anchorites? "The situations and changes of everyday life," writes one girl, "are really important to oneself." Words like these defy gravity and float on their vacuousness. But helium is for zeppelins, so I plan my next lesson with that in mind. Arriving in class, I write on the blackboard: "She told me all of the things she kept locked in her heart." I ask the students to write down what they think said *things* might consist of. After they have read these aloud, we find out that one person's "desire for a medical career" is another's "times she'd pilfered her mother's purse."

Engfish is pompous and patronizing. Students write me sermons attesting to my need for Jesus. They pepper pages with phrases like "obviously" and "as anyone would agree." At its worst though, Engfish is pernicious. Reflecting upon Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer*, a young woman asserts, "Each and every human being is valuable and unique, and not one single thing in the universe can change that." Heavens! Given evidence for such a hope, I'd attend with trembling ears. Instead, words like *Dachau*, *Hiroshima*, and *Cambodia* toll in my forehead. A billion deaths, torturings, and aimless, darkened lives erased in the glide of a ballpoint.

What gives rise to the lofty platitude? Who teaches us to mean so much while establishing so little? Hallmark, talk radio, MTV, I suppose. Whitney Houston's torch-pap perhaps. My colleague, Bill, encourages me to propose a National Honesty in Language Week. It should include schools and colleges everywhere, he says: fourth graders in Boise judging stories by "words that stride" and "words that slither"; high school writers in Buffalo stalking prose jungles with generalities as prey; collegians in Little Rock debating the political uses of euphemisms. The week of honesty would remind us that words launch ideas and that ideas bear consequences.

Lao Tzu warns, "Keep your mouth shut. Guard your senses." Bill scoffs and speaks of change. Five years on in teaching, I guard my sentences and imagine the sounds of wordless speech.

(Robert Schnelle teaches in the English Department at Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina.)

STRIKING THE SAME CHORD: REACHING A CONSENSUS IN GRADING EMPHASES

by Robert Perrin

Ms. Downey, the ninth-grade English teacher, is a stickler for technical correctness, as the *CS*'s, *AGR*'s, and *CAP*'s in the comments on students' papers reflect. Mr. Herrick, the tenth-grade English teacher, values sentence-level work above all else,

as the *AWK*'s, *VAR*'s, and *SUB*'s in his marginal comments show. Mr. McDonald, the eleventh-grade composition teacher, emphasizes logical organization most, as the *TRANS*'s, *LOG*'s, and *U*'s that line students' papers indicate. Mrs. Allen, the college-prep teacher, prizes effective diction, as the *WC*'s, *WW*'s, and *MOD*'s in her marginal notes demonstrate.

Although they work in the same school, eventually share the same students, teach from the same textbook series, and answer to the same department chairperson, these teachers all see student writing in different ways. None is misguided, of course, since each teacher brings to the evaluation of writing special concerns and must of necessity approach writing using his or her own strengths as a teacher. None is necessarily undermining the other teachers' efforts, since writing is a multifaceted process. Yet the impression that students often get in a program like this one—one with different emphases in each classroom—is that evaluating writing is a quirky, individual process that has no uniform set of standards, no generally agreed upon criteria for deciding what is or is not effective writing.

This dilemma in the evaluation of student writing is one that affects many—perhaps even most—departments of English. It is not an easy one to resolve, as all concerned chairpersons know. Adopting elaborate, uniform evaluation sheets may solve the surface problem and give the illusion of absolute agreement about grading standards, but teachers rightfully balk at the sameness of these forms. Individual students do not always need the same comments; varied assignments are not equally well matched to the same forms; complicated forms are often annoying to complete; even different groups of students (those in first hour versus fourth hour or tenth-graders versus eleventh-graders) have needs that can't be met by a generic evaluation form.

Holistic scoring—a procedure that has distinct merits for rating large batches of papers—helps little with evaluation because an agreement on what makes a *4* paper a *4* paper is, of necessity, removed from the comments that teachers want to make on most sets of student papers.

What, then, can teachers within a department do to reach a consensus on grading emphases? How can we develop more consistency than we often have without, at the same time, ignoring the fact that we must all have our individual standards to apply, our favorite features of evaluation to stress?

One Suggestion

A general seven-point standard for uniform notation with a series of brief in-service sessions to develop some degree of uniformity in applying those general principles may work.

For evaluating each student essay, I recommend using a simple half-page form that identifies the most general features of student writing, for example, (1) Thesis or Topic Sentence, (2) Stance, (3) Organization, (4) Content, (5) Sentences, (6) Diction, and (7) Mechanics. These general categories have the advantage of being universally accepted, of being easily applied to many kinds of writing, and of being useful at almost all levels. How these seven features are assessed depends on the context of the evaluation.

I have used these criteria very simply, with blanks labeled *excellent, satisfactory,* and *needs work;* near the beginning of a course, I place a check in the appropriate blanks. At other times, typically later in a course, I compose a grid for each category ranging from *1* (poor) to *10* (excellent); I circle the number that represents the student's success or failure with each major element of the paper. With both kinds of forms, I use the rest of the page for individual comments.

By using these seven categories of evaluation consistently for the evaluation of all written work, teachers within a department can demonstrate for students (and themselves) that certain primary features of writing are universally important. Additionally, the evaluation sheets using these few categories are not restrictive or rigid but instead give teachers the freedom to expand upon their evaluations of individual elements without ignoring other major concerns.

To institute the department-wide use of such a form without some in-service training can have unfortunate results, negating the value of the simple form itself. But the training sessions I have found most useful have been deceptively simple, surprisingly pleasant, and remarkably productive. They have been neither elaborate nor bothersome.

Training Sessions Build Consistency

For these training sessions, I have used seven paragraphs, one to illustrate each of the principles of evaluation. Some of the samples are effectively written; some are not. The point is, however, that we have some writing to look at, to mark, and to discuss together—and that the writing is brief. As we move from paragraph to paragraph, we respond to *only one* primary feature, say organization; we do not concern ourselves with all aspects of the writing at once, for that is when we have bogged down in the past and have had our most unproductive wrangles.

Topic Sentences. To consider the effective use of a topic sentence, for instance, we examine this paragraph:

> Dave's car is one that tells everyone he's successful. The car itself exemplifies wealth and a high status symbol for the driver. The first time I saw it, I was in awe of this godly like machine. It is a deep ocean blue, that makes the car look like a well defined fish swimming gracefully through the water. The car itself is a 1986 Alfo Romeo, an Italian brand car. A person hasn't lived until they've actually sat down in an Alfo Romeo. Actually driving this car must be a dream come true, but I wouldn't know because he didn't let me drive it. I was very impressed with the plush, royality look and feel of the car's interior. The smell of the car is that of a fine European leather shop. We finally took it out for a drive about eight o'clock. It didn't feel like riding in a car, it felt like riding on a cloud over the vast outreaches of the sky. I'd imagine the car cost around forty thousand dollars. I admit, a regular chevy will get you there and back. I guess I'd never pay that kinda money.

As we read, we underline the topic sentence and then jot in the margin labels for major supporting details; we concern ourselves with nothing else—neither the odd spellings nor the strained diction nor the sentence-level problems. This paragraph has a wide range of problems to be sure, but for our purposes during the in-service session, we concentrate on the fact that the paragraph's topic sentence is not supported by the details of the paragraph—its most crucial flaw for our specific purposes.

Effective Organization. To help us reach some kind of consensus on what constitutes effective organization, we read and discuss the following paragraph:

> When I go to Western Ribeye for lunch, it's their salad bar that attracts my attention. After ordering my salad it's always a challenge to create it. Starting off with a sparkling-clean oval shaped plate, there are so many different vegetables and fruits to choose from. As with every masterpiece, it must have a base. While using the clear plastic tongs to retrieve the shredded lettuce from the clear glass bowl submerged in ice, you can see the small drops of water fall from the crisp, green leaves. After supplying the base, the layer of sweet, red onions enhances the texture and taste of the lettuce. Following the onions are the ripe olives with their salty taste, sliced thin to accommodate the small square-cut ham cubes. On top of the ham rests the fresh taste of finely chopped eggs covered by a heavy layer of long, thin slices of cheddar cheese. Playing King of the Mountain, the Thousand Island salad dressing adds the flavor of

sweet spices with chunks of vegetables to bring out the natural, fresh taste of all of the vegetables. With a sprinkle of crunchy bacon bits, I have created my masterpieee.

When reading the paragraph to discuss organization, we underline the items being discussed (in this case the ingredients in a salad). Then we jot in the margin the pattern of organization (in this case spatial, from bottom to top). By isolating only the major elements and concentrating on only the organization of details in the paragraph, we are able to discuss the sample quickly and productively, noting here that the arrangement is effective.

Mechanics. To focus our work with mechanics, we read this paragraph:

> Josh's Camaro Z-28 is a sleek, fast, beautiful car. When he drives down Wabash Avenue the girls go nuts, they start yelling at him telling him what a nice car he has. Josh is a nice guy, but without that car the girls wouldn't go out of their way to meet him or talk to him. The car is a bright red 1984 Camaro Z-28. Its 305 cubic inch engine is set off with a five speed manual transmission and dual exhaust. Josh rides in comfort with all the extras at his finger tips like power windows and door locks, air conditioning, AM/FM stereo cassette, and T-tops. The mere $8,000.00 that he paid for it seems to be worth it every time a beautiful girl asks for a ride. To me, I think its a very impressive car for anybody's standards. So if you're out there driving like a jerk, don't hit Josh's car its his prize possession.

As we read, we mark nothing but technical errors. Then we discuss the problems, sentence by sentence, and discuss which errors are major and which errors are minor.

We examine additional paragraphs to discuss stance, content, diction, and sentences—looking again at only one feature per paragraph. The advantages of one-feature analysis are many: we can move quickly through many paragraphs without getting bogged down, we can discuss in isolation specific features without getting side-tracked, and we can emphasize the seven primary features of writing without one feature receiving undue emphasis in discussions.

This combination of a simple, seven-part form and in-service sessions to reinforce uniform evaluation within the department has been valuable. Now, students who move through the writing program discover that, regardless of the specific kind of writing that is being evaluated, the same primary qualities receive attention; additional comments reflecting a teacher's special concerns expand upon the basic responses, not exclude them. And our in-service work gives all of us a shared set of responses to use in our evaluations.

In short, those of us evaluating student writing begin by striking the same chord and then move on to play our own variations of the melody—but the melody is one our students will hear many times before they leave our writing program.

(Robert Perrin teaches English at Indiana State University in Terre Haute, Indiana.)

A TRUE JOB DESCRIPTION: ONE READER WRITES

by Martha C. Darter

Recently, I sat down with my issues of *English Journal* to do some catch-up reading. I first perused September, then leafed through October, and right there on page 85 was an article by people I knew . . . from Idaho! (Yes, Virginia, there is an Idaho!) Furthermore, the column was pertinent and provocative. This year is my twentieth at St. Maries High School, and since 1974, I have assumed the duties of a department chair. The following is my job description, as nearly as I can figure it out.

Job Title: Language Arts Department Chair

Qualifications: Oldest surviving member of English Department

Monetary Compensation: None

Time Allotted to Fulfill Responsibilities: My spare time

Responsibilities of Chair:

1. Act as intermediary between colleagues and principal, i.e., the bearer of bad news.
2. Act as intermediary between principal and colleagues, i.e., the bearer of worse news.
3. Coordinate writing/revision of language arts philosophy and curriculum, grades 7–12.
4. Coordinate text and materials selections for language arts, grades 7–12.
5. Write letters of recommendation for a number of teachers, quite a few juniors, and most of the seniors.
6. Proofread communications for superintendent, principal, secretaries, and teachers of science, social studies, math, business, and vocational subjects.
7. Proofread manuscripts of such aspiring literary greats as former students, former and current students' parents, friends and relatives thereof, casual acquaintances, and anyone else who gets my name.
8. Provide colleagues with support and sympathy, advice and aspirin.
9. Perform other duties as dreamed up by administration.

Other Responsibilities:

1. Teach six classes a day, including Senior Honors English, English III, and Basic English III.
2. Sponsor Junior Class and Litwits Club.
3. Sell tickets at athletic events, patrol lunchroom, and take hall duty as assigned.

Goals: Friday evenings!

A number of variations on the above obligations throughout the years have included writing a grant proposal for adapted curriculum in 9th through 12th grade English classes, presenting the proposal to other teachers, presenting in-service and school board programs, coaching drama, supervising a cadet teacher, producing the school newspaper, and teaching just about everything from Advanced Composition to Western Novel. Time does fly when you're having fun, and somehow I feel I am not alone!

(Martha C. Darter chairs the English Department at St. Maries, Idaho.)

DEPARTMENTAL AEROBICS: STRETCHING PROFESSIONAL MUSCLES

by Shirley A. Lyster

How did you become department chair? Did you apply? Did you inherit? Were you elected? Does the job rotate among members of your department? Whichever is the answer, I hope you thoroughly enjoy your job! Each of us makes our job into what *we* perceive it to be. Your perception may differ from mine. All I can do is recommend what has worked in *my* department.

At this time in your career I would guess that you are probably highly respected by the administration, the public, and parents; you get along well with people, and you genuinely care about them; you like what you do, and it shows! You are an excellent teacher, and other teachers know this and emulate your work.

When I became chair, I had taught nearly 18 years and had taught every level, every year; I had been sophomore syllabus

chair and junior syllabus chair. I *loved* teaching and *hated* to give up the classroom time, yet I was at the point in my career when I knew it would be difficult for me to teach for someone else. The two previous chairs had set a precedent for excellence in our department, and I wanted that excellence to continue.

As I was preparing for the job, my departing chair told me that he thought it was one of the loneliest jobs in the world. My principal cautioned me, "Shirley, don't ever let them vote on anything! Don't let yourself be cornered!"

I have seldom felt lonely, and I have allowed my department to have the opportunity to know and discuss all issues. I personally have to have all the cards on the table; I am not coy, sly, or devious (well, not usually!). The organization of the department is our strength, I believe, and I heartily recommend it to you.

My strength as a department chair *is* in stretching my teachers. Some stretchers are:

1. I try to reinforce their security and challenge their creativity by having core requirements for graduation plus freshmen and sophomore years that are traditional in nature, but by enriching with 9 weeks electives in the junior and senior years. This program evolves constantly. We evaluate each course and re-write or update continuously.
2. I insist on three preps each 9 weeks. I have had 3 different preps most of my teaching career and have found it challenges and interests me each day.
3. I constantly review new texts and materials, whatever I think they might find helpful in their classes. They seldom have time to browse in catalogs.
4. I encourage experimentation with new techniques, new courses, new units. I allow piloting if the idea is a sound one and has possibilities. I seldom say no. If I am in doubt, I consult the entire department. They tell it like it is!
5. I have written and piloted a large number of new courses, and the following year I encourage someone else to try them.
6. I encouraged experimentation with the American literature syllabus. We wrote two—one, chronological and one, thematic. We use both; the teacher may choose.
7. We evaluate courses and get direct feedback from kids to teachers. I make the tallies available to the entire department so that teachers can see how they stack up against other teachers teaching the same courses. They see differences immediately!
8. I find articles in magazines and professional journals that pertain to their interests and courses. I fill files in the resource center for them. I leave materials lying on the top of my desk (and I know they look there!). Most of all, I try to make them *need* to take professional journals and to belong to our organizations. I sent in all of their names to NCTE a year ago and several joined that had not previously.
9. I try to facilitate trips, speakers, locations, materials, and money so that they can provide enrichment for their classes or for themselves.
10. I try to buy things above and beyond what they need—*surprises*—things to help them be comfortable and have a nest of their own.
11. I try to involve all members in giving programs for a variety of audiences.

    We have a Personal Growth Day each year for the entire school corporation's teachers. Last year, I suggested every single one of the teachers give programs, listing their special areas. I did not consult them first, but later sent them a bulletin informing them of what I had done. While all could not be selected, four *were*, and all seemed pleased that they had been included. They *knew* that I thought they had something worthwhile to offer!

    I have asked them to give programs for the Indiana Council of Teachers of English, and for the Language Arts Conference at Indiana University. If I am asked to give a program, I include 5 or 6 of the department members. Our department has presented for NCTE at San Francisco, Denver, Cincinnati, and Columbus, Ohio. We have presented three local workshops on our peer tutoring program and one on the adult tutoring program. Our peer tutors received a standing ovation for their presentation at the Indiana Teachers of Writing conference.
12. One stretcher-reacher combination is that I encourage, in fact *nag*, them to take workshops, to apply for grants, and especially for NEH grants. We have had three in the last two years, and what they have brought back to the department has been invaluable.
13. In order to reach my teachers, I want to be honest, to share problems, to work on decisions as a group, to fight for causes as a group. Don't be afraid to take them into your confidence. It will reap great rewards for you. Delegate authority but work alongside them. *Don't undercut* your delegated authority or you are in real trouble. Fight for your people and your departmental autonomy. You cannot do this and expect to win if you have not worked hard to build up a position of respect within the school corporation and community. But, if you have, you can certainly expect to win *some* of the battles. It is amazing how quickly your reputation will work *for* you in the community.
14. Involve the community as much as possible. There is much ignorance out there; much of it is our fault! Having an adult tutor program of 27 volunteers who worked in our department for 9 weeks has been a very positive experience.
15. I make speeches for service clubs, write articles for the newspaper, and take them to the editor until he screams, "Shirley, you've got to be kidding!" But I am always praising my teachers. It is *not* B.S.; it is truth that I can back up. I keep telling them how good they are and they become better!
16. Inform them with bulletins from the chair—weekly or daily if necessary. I bind them and this provides me with a complete record of the year for handy reference. Make some of them light and crazy, but keep everyone informed and involved. Because *I* type them, they are frequently a mess. My department refers to them as "stream of consciousness at the typewriter" or "Shirley's epistles." They call me "Shirley Rex" and speak of our meetings as "command performances," but these are friendly jabs. We also have social get-togethers with spouses, friends, sometimes just us.
17. Remember you are only as strong as the weakest link, and sometimes you have no control over the hiring and firing of that link—particularly if they are coaches or castoffs of other schools or departments. You and others must make it possible for these people to succeed. Stretch them, reach them, inform them, involve them, praise them.

But a word of caution—don't be the department doormat; don't take the crummiest courses; don't load yourself down so that you cannot help *them;* don't do everything yourself; and don't even think of trying to do everything yourself—*delegate!* But work *with* them: don't be a martyr; don't talk about members

of your department to others in or out of the department unless you are giving praise; don't hold yourself aloof as management — be one of them. Keep them informed: don't allow them to reinforce negatives in the department meetings or lounges (schedule them wisely and form committees wisely).

Don't command—*suggest* or *request*. *Do* keep them busy, interested, challenged, growing. Keep telling them they are professionals. The department chair must be an exemplary classroom teacher, a leader with new ideas, imagination, colossal nerve; the chair must be a teacher of teachers, a confessor, a friend, a therapist, a mediator, a cheering squad, a constantly squeaking wheel, a public relations expert, a challenger, a praiser, and a dreamer. You have one of the best jobs in the world. Be proud! Enjoy it!

(Shirley A. Lyster chairs the English Department at North High School, Columbus, Indiana, and is a member-at-large of the CSSEDC Executive Committee.)

POSITION STATEMENT ON THE ROLE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

Recommendations prepared by the Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons:

1. State and district boards of education should recognize the need for professional subject-matter leadership and mandate the appointment of heads of departments in each discipline.
2. The chair must have a clearly defined job description, which includes responsibilities regarding supervision, evaluation, and other leadership functions.
3. Under the chair's leadership, each English department should develop a written philosophy reflecting the uniqueness of the English discipline and the diversity of students, teachers, and community members.
4. The chair should have released time and compensation according to department responsibilities.
5. The chair should serve as a catalyst in developing a curriculum that is consistent with student needs, state law, and local school board policy.
6. School officials can support the chair by providing teachers with common preparation periods and released time for curriculum development.
7. The chair must share in the responsibility for selecting and employing English teachers and assigning those teachers to areas appropriate to their professional strengths.
8. Boards of education and school officials need to support staff development, encouraging the chair to determine department needs regarding intra-department exchanges, interschool visitations, conferences, institutes, and workshops.
9. The chair shall direct the continued evaluation of student performance and growth and aid teachers in selecting or developing appropriate evaluation materials and systems.
10. The chair must have adequate time and resources to initiate the exchange of necessary information and serve as a liaison to the administration, the board of education, the community, and the public.
11. The chair should be provided office space and clerical help, and every department center should have room for professional materials and activities.
12. The chair needs to work with other appropriate personnel, such as librarians and media specialists, to develop academic resource centers for teachers and students.
13. The chair must work cooperatively with district- and state-level English specialists, other curriculum developers, and chairs of other school departments to develop policies and procedures related to the English program.
14. The English department should develop a policy as outlined in *The Students' Right to Read* (NCTE) for addressing community concerns about the English curriculum, for example, working within its own clearly established guidelines in the selection of its books and materials and being involved in the formulation of any district policies concerning such selection.
15. The guidelines in *Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English Language Arts* (NCTE) should be implemented in cooperation with teacher education institutions, as the chair and members of the department work to develop appropriate in-school experiences and provide constructive internships for student teachers. (*Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English Language Arts, 1986*. Denny Wolfe, chair, and members of the NCTE Standing Committee on Teacher Preparation and Certification. 21p. 1986. $2.50. No. 19794.)

Consideration of these recommendations is of crucial importance to school officials in the positive, sound administration of English departments and the pursuit of excellence.

CSSEDC News

CSSEDC ELECTIONS

The following nominees for the CSSEDC Executive Board were named during the CSSEDC Board meeting in Boston, March 23, 1988:

- For Associate Chair:
  Myles Eley, English Department Chair at Warren Central High School, Indianapolis, Indiana.
  Donald Stephan, English Department Chair, Sidney High School, Sidney, Ohio.
- For Member-at-Large (2 to be elected):
  Susan Hayles Berbower, English Honors Teacher at Edison High School and English Facilitator, Huntington Beach Union High School District, California.
  Ira Hayes, Supervisor of English, Syosset High School, Syosset, New York.
  Dorothy "Dottie" McCrossen, English Department Chair, Ottowa High School, Ottowa, Kansas.
  Deborah Smith-McCullars, Language Arts Department Chair, Dean Morgan Junior High School, Casper, Wyoming.

Please watch the October CSSEDC QUARTERLY for new voting procedures and a ballot.

It is the policy of NCTE in its journals and other publications to provide a forum for the open discussion of ideas concerning the content and the teaching of English and the language arts. Publicity accorded to any particular point of view does not imply endorsement by the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or the membership at large, except in announcements of policy where such endorsement is clearly specified. Copyright for articles published in *CSSEDC Quarterly* reverts to the respective authors.

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CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS— PLANS FOR FUTURE ISSUES

The *CSSEDC Quarterly*, a publication of the Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons of NCTE, seeks articles of 250–3000 words on topics of interest to English department leaders. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are encouraged. Recent surveys of our readers reveal these topics to be of interest: encouraging leadership within the department, evaluating teachers and curriculum, and implementing change. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In addition, upcoming issues will have these themes:

October 1988
(July 1 deadline): "Computer Labs for English"

December 1988
(September 15 deadline): "Professional Development Days"

February 1989
(November 1 deadline): "High School-College Articulation"

May 1989
(February 1 deadline): "Research in the Classroom"

Address articles and inquiries to: James Strickland, Editor, *CSSEDC Quarterly*, English Department, Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania, 16057-1326.

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CSSEDC Quarterly

Conference for Secondary School
English Department Chairpersons

Volume 10, Number 3
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Editor: James Strickland

In This Issue

COMPUTER LABS FOR ENGLISH

by James Strickland, editor

I've always found it comforting to have friends around when beginning anything new. So, as I begin editing the *Quarterly*, I'm glad to have friends with me—old friends, new friends, true friends.

This issue is dedicated to "Computer Labs for English." When I began to outline the themes for the 1988–89 issues of the *Quarterly*, it seemed natural to begin with the computer, an old friend of mine, one with whom I've spent years exploring its benefits, especially as employed to teach writing.

Some continue to scoff at the attention being paid the computer, objecting that no one wrote about the revolution of the Bic pen in the classroom and no one claimed the typewriter improved writing ability. Nevertheless, I am old enough to remember fountain pens and inkwells, and I maintain that the ballpoint pen did cause a revolution, albeit a minor one. The computer, though, has caused a major revolution, and we will be quite a while determining the most productive and innovative ways to use it in our classrooms. As evidence, I simply point to the number of manuscripts I received for this issue, and boldly state that I plan to continue the discussion in the next issue.

The first article is written by Tony Hughes, a teacher of remedial writers, working in the academic skills center of Buffalo State College. Tony is a new friend whom I met while I was giving a workshop on computers at Buffalo State. Tony immediately recognized the possibilities word processing had for his students. His article discusses the powerful change in his students' perceptions of themselves as writers and the importance of play as an element of learning.

The second article is written by Susan Benjamin, the chairperson of the English department of Highland Park High School. Sue is an old friend to the *Quarterly*, having published an article last year, and a new friend to me, having met at the CSSEDC Conference in Los Angeles, where she spoke about implementing in-service programs. I invited her to write an article for the "Professional Development Days" issue; Susan was so enthusiastic about their computer writing lab that she wrote this article instead. In it, she describes how her department went about changing the curriculum to include the computer lab as an alternate class site. The computer writing lab turns out to be a meeting place—common ground where teachers help other teachers' students as well as their own and where students learn from other teachers as well as their own.

The third article is written by Wendy Paterson, a good friend with whom I taught at a small junior college in Buffalo. We've both since moved on; Wendy is now the director in charge of setting up a student-centered computer learning lab for Buffalo State College. She is also the editor of the newsletter of the New York College Learning Skills Association. Wendy describes one of the simplest but most effective ways to teach sentence analysis with the computer.

The fourth article is written by Neil Cosgrove, a friend and colleague at Slippery Rock University. Neil is the coordinator of our writing center and has been busy installing IBM system/2 computers. His article discusses collaboration in the computer lab.

This certainly sounds revolutionary to me.

Inside... page number

Word Processing: Changes in the Classroom; Changes in the Writer by Tony Hughes 2
The Writing Lab: Combining Teacher Expertise and Technology by Susan Benjamin 3
Sentence Examination Using the Word Processor by Wendy Paterson 4
Conferencing with Computers by Neil Cosgrove 5
CSSEDC Candidates 6
The Ballot 8

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WORD PROCESSING: CHANGES IN THE CLASSROOM; CHANGES IN THE WRITER

by Tony Hughes
Buffalo State College

Last semester, I had one of those teaching experiences all freshman composition instructors cherish but rarely enjoy. It was the fourth class of the semester, and in the previous class, my students had learned all they needed to know to be able to work independently on the word processor. I walked into class a few minutes early and was stunned to see that at least a third of my students were already there, and they were already writing. The surreal thrill of this moment will always be with me; it was the first time in seven years of teaching composition that my students had voluntarily arrived early and had voluntarily started writing.

Of course, my students had not come to work at improving their long-suffering writing skills; they had come to play with the word processor. The great news for English instructors using word processing in the classroom is that students cannot play without writing. This phenomenon of being involved with the machine is not an isolated incident, continuing only until the novelty is gone. Throughout the past two semesters, I consistently heard that unmistakable clatter of creation. For a majority of my students, the novelty apparently never wears off.

A Fresh Start

The students' excitement over the capabilities of this highly stimulating, glorified typewriter is the greatest advantage of the word processor. Many of my students share with me their long histories of nightmarish experiences with the entire act of writing. In short, because their previous experiences have been so frustrating, they came to the first day of class having glumly resigned themselves to yet another course of "Tedium 101." For many, learning to write with a word processor provides a fresh start, a break in the cycle of negative attitudes and helplessness. The machine bleeps and flashes, and the cursor pulsates, anthropomorphized and waiting for words; my students feel comfortable and entranced before the familiar, glowing machine, allowing interaction with the text rather than simple production of it. The computer helps my students break away from their negative associations with the pen and paper approach to revision, the real pain of writing. Before remedial students can ever improve their writing skills, they must first change their attitude about writing and about themselves as "nonwriters."

Positive Attitude

In order to help these students overcome their histories of hating writing, the first lesson they must learn—and any other skills they acquire hinge on whether they learn this lesson—is that writing can actually be a pleasurable rather than a painful experience, that they can become competent, and that there is hope. This is one of the remarkable differences between the traditional classroom, where students grudgingly do their in-class assignments while the instructor goes around the room working with only a few students, and the word processing classroom, where all the students are actively engaged with the blinking, flashing screen that talks to them, does their bidding, and makes their work look truly professional. For the first time in their lives, students begin to take a sense of pride in their papers' appearance, and they tend to be generally more meticulous about the overall appearance of their work. Though the content may be as full of problems as it would have been with paper and pen, the joy of production is an important first step down the long road to developing a positive attitude toward writing.

Individual Attention

All remedial writers need a great deal of personal instruction—individual help necessary to account for the potpourri of writing problems. In any class, one can have five students, all making comma splices but for five different reasons, all needing five different explanations of why they are making that mistake. Thus, although remedial writers benefit from generic lectures concerning writing concepts and grammar, they benefit the most from individual assistance, another area of strength for this technology. With the introduction of the word processor to the classroom, the instructor can conference with one student, while other students, involved and stimulated, interact with the machine and continue working on their writing without demanding the instructor's constant attention. Whenever my students are writing on-line, I seldom see any glancing about the room; they are usually quite enchanted by the luminescent screen, a situation somehow more conducive to positive student/teacher interaction.

More Writing

In her landmark work, *Errors and Expectations*, which concerns itself with the problems of working with remedial writers, Mina Shaughnessy (1977) notes that the typical British high school student may write approximately 1,000 words per week, whereas the typical student in an American, suburban middle class school may write 350 words per week, and if one goes to an urban high school, a student may write as little as 350 words per semester. Thus, typical remedial writers about to take freshman composition are comparable to persons who suddenly find themselves in an Olympic marathon, having prepared only by running around the block once or twice. Another crucial need of all remedial writers is simply to write, and write, and write some more. Many of them have written very little in their entire lives.

Research has shown that students will compose more on the word processor, but instructors can increase student interaction and ensure an even greater involvement by creating, without any programming expertise, lesson files that students use on the computer to guide them with the task at hand (Rodrigues and Rodrigues 1986).

The Ease of Editing

The word processor's magical ability to add, delete, and move words, sentences, and paragraphs at the touch of a button is possibly its greatest contribution to struggling writers, who need to focus on developing their skills and their sense of the writing process rather than their mechanical dexterity. Remedial writers have the greatest need to learn about and use the writing process effectively and to become aware of the steps required to put a piece of work together, the questions writers ask themselves, the problems to look for when they are revising their rough drafts, and the standards or goals to attain each time they revise an essay.

The computer is a friendlier writing tool than the pen: students can get help to bypass their physical writing blocks, and they can simply enjoy playing with the machine—no wonder many students find that their ideas flow far more smoothly. Even students who have little or no typing skills do not appear to be handicapped; they pick up speed with practice and make corrections with the ease of a keystroke.

The key word here is revision. Students who work with the traditional pen and paper method hate the idea of revision because revising means rewriting, and rewriting means slow repetitive work. Remedial writers must learn what global revision means as well as how to do it. Compared with my past pen and paper

students, my word processing students have grown markedly as editors. They tend to see more of their mistakes because they are easier to catch when typed neatly on the screen. They do not mind wiping out an entire introduction and replacing it with their former conclusion because the procedure takes only a moment.

Conclusion

For lack of a better term, learning word processing can be "psychologically" beneficial for remedial students, not merely because it improves their writing skills but because it makes them feel better about their own abilities to learn; it gives them a sense of efficacy over their own schoolwork. While much of what they learn in school—especially in an area such as writing—is difficult to measure quantitatively, accomplishing a series of weekly computer tasks gives them measurable skills that they can learn, clearly understand, and appreciate. It improves their focusing skills and expands their desensitized concentration spans. Learning to manipulate this instrument gives them a new sense of sophistication, a sense that they have taken one of their first successful steps toward mastering an instrument that will significantly add to their status in mainstream society (considering the star-wars romanticism that surrounds the present mythology of high-tech pop culture), thus contributing to the all encompassing self-concept that needs to be secure before academic progress is even possible.

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THE WRITING LAB: COMBINING TEACHER EXPERTISE AND TECHNOLOGY

by Susan Benjamin
Highland Park High School, Illinois

The computers were coming! In the summer of 1985, English teachers at Highland Park High School were told that the English department would receive 11 Macintosh computers as part of a pilot program to aid in composition instruction. The question: how could we best use the computers to help students write well? The answer: set up a writing lab in which teacher expertise (the primary component) and technology (the secondary component) join together to facilitate growth in student writing.

Before any pilot program can be successful, the people who are responsible for initiating and implementing the program must become thoroughly invested in the goals and development of the program. Because the writing lab pilot would take place on the freshman level (all freshmen would be taught word processing and editing by using MacWrite), their English teachers had to become knowledgeable about and comfortable with the computers. In order to train the teachers, a summer workshop was held in which all freshman English teachers learned MacWrite. After the workshop was completed, teachers were allowed (in fact, encouraged) to take the computers home to practice. At the end of August, teachers returned to school, computers in hand. All traces of "computerphobia" had disappeared. Teachers reported that they not only had gained proficiency in using the new system, but also had enjoyed working (and playing) with the machines in their homes.

Using the Writing Lab as Part of the Curriculum

Teachers developed a five-day word processing/editing unit to be used as part of the freshman curriculum, where each freshman English class was scheduled to work in the writing lab for one week during regular class time. On the fifth day of that week, the students would take a proficiency test.

As the English department chairperson, I felt some initial discomfort about taking a week from the freshman curriculum to teach students word processing and editing. Obviously, another part of the curriculum would have to be sacrificed in order to use a week for the new project. However, as I observed the eagerness with which students composed at the computers, and as I saw how being able to shift words and sentences around in a paragraph with relative ease turned students on to writing, all hesitation I felt at the prospect of losing other curricular content disappeared. The teachers led the unit with great enthusiasm, and by the end of the week, the students were given a proficiency test, which almost all students passed easily. The students were then given access to their own disks in the writing lab so that, during free periods, they could drop in and use the word processors to compose their themes.

Since 1985, the writing lab has become a training ground for all freshmen. By the end of the first semester, all freshmen know how to compose at the word processors. This year (1988–89), all students in our school will know how to use the word processors to write and edit their papers. We now have 17 Macintosh computers and are working our way up to a full classroom set. In terms of training students to view computers as writing tools, the writing lab program has been successful.

Alternative Classroom Site

The writing lab serves as an alternative classroom site for the one week of the freshman English unit. However, other classes, both within and outside of the English department, are also welcome to use the writing lab as an alternative classroom site, schedules permitting. Teachers are welcome to sign up for class lab time for intervals ranging from a day to a few weeks. For example, teachers of the composition skills classes or the creative writing classes bring their students to the lab to compose at the word processors. This past year, in addition to English classes, a limited English proficiency science class and a limited English proficiency social studies class each used the lab facilities for a week. The science teacher commented that student compositions written in the lab were the most successful assignments ever completed in his class. When his students were able to see tangible evidence of their work neatly done in English, they felt a tremendous sense of accomplishment.

The lab is also open nine periods per day for students to drop in and get assistance with composition. The lab is staffed eight periods per day by a full-time aide who also serves as the lab manager, and seven periods per day by a teacher. Therefore, during most classroom periods, both a teacher and the aide are present in the lab; otherwise, either the aide or the teacher is in the lab.

For a teacher, a writing lab assignment is in lieu of a class assignment. Therefore, the teacher is expected to spend all 42 minutes actively engaged in coaching students through the process of writing. The teacher may work with the students either at the word processors or at one of a number of round tables. They are encouraged to spend time talking about writing and are discouraged from putting marks on the students' papers. Teachers help students to focus on thinking and on the reasons behind the organization of a paper. They are trained to brainstorm

with the students and to ask questions such as, "What would happen if . . .?" Teachers serve as writing facilitators and coaches; they do not write the students' papers.

Benefits of the Writing Lab

This past semester, an average of 90 students per day "dropped in" to the writing lab during their free periods. This year, when mentioning school highlights in their yearbook, students reported a tremendous sense of satisfaction with the writing lab, viewing the writing lab as a real resource. The lab is a place where students want to go because of the cozy ambience in which visual and auditory distractions are minimized. Students enjoy the small group interaction in the lab, where they work with teachers and other students in a less structured setting than is found in a typical classroom.

Because the lab is located within the English department, resource materials are an arm's reach away. Often, teachers will drop in to the lab to work during their free periods. The lab is a good place for teachers to model the kind of work habits and behavior that they expect from their students. Also, this year, the student publications (newspaper, yearbook, and literary magazine) have been moved to rooms adjoining the lab so that, during free periods, student writers and editors can use the computers to work on publications under the guidance of teachers.

An additional benefit of the writing lab is that teachers help students compose other teachers' assignments. Therefore, teachers learn their colleagues' assignments, and through viewing others' assignments, expand their own repertoire of lesson strategies, while developing a greater sense of collegiality and respect for each others' work.

English teachers and students alike are aware that writing well is a challenging task. Knowing that assistance is available, both in the form of writing experts (teachers) and writing tools (computers), can be an incentive for students to spend more time on practicing and thinking through the writing process. A writing lab in which human and technological resources are readily accessible can provide enhanced opportunities for the development of strong student communication skills.

SENTENCE EXAMINATION USING THE WORD PROCESSOR

by Wendy Paterson
Buffalo State College

For three years, I have been actively involved in the exploration of computer technology and word processing as effective teaching and learning tools. The research on the use of word processing in teaching remedial writers is impressive and most supportive of the benefits of easy revision and personal interaction. English teachers who use word processing agree that it is an excellent motivator which encourages students to write more, but we should now concentrate our efforts in developing strategies that allow active intervention in the writing process.

This year, in a freshman composition class for remedial writers, I used a simple technique to help my students isolate each sentence from the paragraph and to let them see graphically the limits and patterns of individual sentences. Normally, writers have difficulty identifying their own sentence structures in the context of a composition because they read with a thought context that does not allow them to distinguish between what they think they have written and what they have actually written.

In this exercise, called "sentence examination," my students use the "return" and "delete" keys to break their sentences out of their paragraphs. By placing the cursor at the period ending each sentence and then pressing "return" twice, sentences are easily separated by a double space and adjusted to the left margin. The resulting open spaces break the thought context and allow the students to see the structures and patterns of their sentences (see figure 1). This technique is similar to the word processing system devised by James Joyce (1981) of the University of California, Berkeley who uses a computer program to separate and justify sentences for easier physical and mental examination. Our activity, however, requires no instrument or additional software. It uses only the "return" and "delete" keys and the student's own writing.

Student composition before separation:

I was born in Buffalo, grew up in Sardinia, NY. Went to Pioneer and Eden Central School. Graduated at Lackawanna Sr. High.

I want to work with law enforcement and Special Education. I got an "d" in a Social Work class because she only gave one test and one exam. I ended up getting sick in the class, the day of one first test, where I went to the hospital that day, which affected my average.

I believe working with the computer is a good idea.

Student composition after separation:

I was born in Buffalo, grew up in Sardinia, NY.

Went to Pioneer and Eden Central School.

Graduated at Lackawanna Sr. High.

I want to work with law enforcement and Special Education.

I got an "d" in a Social Work class because she only gave one test and one exam.

I ended up getting sick in the class, the day of one first test, where I went to the hospital that day, which affected my average.

I believe working with the computer is a good idea.

Fig. 1. Sentence Examination on the Word Processor.

Notice that the fragments become more visible; the short sentences with subject "I" become more obvious. It is easier for the student to analyze the awkwardness of the longer sentence as well if it is further separated at the commas.

Students who had become convinced that they would never be able to correct their own sentence faults were able to see them clearly. In my experience, students who do well on isolated exercises with examples of fragments for identification and rewriting may still turn in compositions with the same fragment errors they had always exhibited. This is largely because of the nontransference of skills from isolated grammar exercises to actual writing practice (Hartwell 1985). Identifying someone else's errors is always easier than identifying one's own. The sentence examination exercise uses the student's own writing for analysis, then allows the student to remove the sentence breaks and resynthesize the paragraph with corrected sentences. With just a few keystrokes, the student is able to practice two of the most important cognitive functions of reading and writing: analysis and synthesis.

In addition to revealing sentence faults, this exercise also allows students to see how many of the same sentence patterns they are repeating. Suddenly, it was visually apparent to Joe that he was using all simple structures, to Lisa that she started nine out of twelve sentences with a pronoun, to Jane that she used all passive constructions. A printout of the work gave them an even clearer picture. At this point it became relevant to consider sentence combining and various other structures as alternatives to overused patterns. Simple? Almost sinfully so. Effective? Definitely.

Once the work has been examined sentence by sentence, the reassembled paragraph is examined as a whole. The major fault in the teaching of grammar is a reductionist tendency to analyze

without resynthesizing, to consider skills in isolation without accounting for the writing process. Not only are CAI exercises (designed to drill reduced skills in grammar) tedious in themselves, but also they subject students to the particular kind of button pushing which only supports the idea that writing itself is tedious. With compositions created on the word processor, students are already actively involved with their own creations, not as a reduced, step-by-step procedure, but *first* as a whole and *then* as the sum of its parts.

Because the most natural kind of writing begins with the production of a whole, and because revision begins with an examination of the parts, the end result must be the reexamination of the whole again (Sommers 1980). Good writers do not struggle to put correct parts together during invention; they struggle with ideas and the flow of those ideas. Remedial writers tend to be obsessed with the mechanical at the cost of the more global matters of content and organization. Using the word processor with remedial writers helps to free these students from the mental games of writing correctly the first time. No writer should be distracted by worries about fragments, run-ons, comma splices, and spelling during invention. That stops the writing process cold—the ideas dry up or ramble; the words do not fit together. The writer learns to hate writing. With the special techniques we use on the word processor, revising tools become parts of a final analysis; the sentence examination exercise cannot be done without first having a completed work. Students begin to let revision "know its place."

Advocates of word processing in the composition classroom should spend time thinking of ways these programs can be adapted to serve as a tutorial aid rather than as just another writing machine. The simplicity of the sentence examination activity makes me confident that other writing teachers are using other simple techniques that should be shared. Without the expense of "canned" software programs or complicated authoring languages and programming expertise, writing teachers can use the computer as a more friendly catalyst for change than that hellish red pen.

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CONFERENCING WITH COMPUTERS

by Neil Cosgrove
Slippery Rock University

Conferencing is an activity that writing teachers and researchers are convinced is one of the most effective ways to intervene in the composing process. But while our enthusiasm is considerable, limits of time and place constrain the use of conferencing. Student access to teachers is limited to class time and after-school appointments. Computer conferencing may be one way to stretch the aforementioned limits, by allowing for the creation of small support groups of writers who could tune in to each other's work through a centrally-located microcomputer.

With that idea in mind, I developed a small-scale experiment that involved four writers. During three class sessions, they took turns sitting at an Apple IIe microcomputer and adding to a file set up using the Applewriter word processing program. They typed in whole pieces of discourse—short ones such as poems or journal entries—and segments of discourse—usually opening or exploratory paragraphs. They responded to what others had written. At the end of each class, the file was printed out, and copies were distributed to participants before the next class began. I discovered that computers carry with them time limitations of their own. But I also learned much about the dynamics involved in computer conferencing and gained a sense of how such conferencing might be used in a writing class.

Observations

During the final class session, I interviewed all four of the participants. I wanted to know how they felt about the computer as a conferencing tool. How did the machine contribute to the process? How did it interfere? Participants observed that the machine's very lack of human characteristics encouraged both initiative and response. "It's clean and neat," said the first writer. "I can write a lot longer and a lot more fluently," concluded the second. They both liked the fact that the computer was stationary. It would not walk away from the writer, but the writer could walk away from it. The computer could not be critical, nor could it be distracted. It allowed each participant to confront the others in a place devoid of the immediate and irreversible risks inherent in personal contact. Some stimulation was lost, but so was some threat.

The experiment itself had the effect of focusing the writers on their writing. "We were doing a project together," said the third writer. "I liked that. It was a separate world to go into. It helped me concentrate."

That was the good news. The bad news appeared to have less to do with the idea of computer conferencing than with the physical limitations of this particular experiment. The most frequent gripe among the participants concerned a lack of time. My experiment, you will recall, only spanned three class sessions. Furthermore, only half the class time was spent in the computer lab for two of those sessions, and the participants were limited to no more than 15 minutes on the computer at a time. The third writer complained of feeling rushed. The fourth would have liked to put more original writing onto the disk, like an entire story rather than just the first few paragraphs.

Time restrictions may also have detracted from the quality of participants' responses to others' work. "You didn't have enough time to think about what you wanted to say," the fourth writer continued. And the third observed that "people weren't completely honest in their responses." One reason might have been the felt need to exercise the kind of surface politeness strangers require when they communicate with each other. More time may have been needed to breed familiarity and trust. One question that intrigues me, but which I cannot answer in any definite way, is this: were the responses typed into the computer more honest and direct than the oral ones exchanged by participants? I suspect, after examining the printouts, that they were. But it is only a suspicion.

The second major problem grew out of the fact that monitors can only display a few paragraphs at a time. All the participants agreed that this limitation made people more likely to respond to the previous entry than to entries inserted earlier in the evening. The very first entry was ignored completely during the initial class session and elicited its first response during the third week. If not for the weekly printouts distributed among the participants, even this response may not have occurred.

Conclusions

My experience suggests conditions that contribute to the successful use of computer conferencing within a writing course. Groups of four, created at the very beginning of a course and allowed to work with each other throughout an entire term, would allow participants to get acquainted and to do some preliminary conferencing before they actually began making entries on the computer. Such a grace period could serve to develop trust among all four group members and might prevent the creation of even smaller units within the group. Using an entire semester would also allow for the introduction of lengthy pieces of discourse. Directions for obtaining longer pieces could be inserted into the conferencing file by the interested writer, or printouts could be left alongside the computer, with a request to "Please Respond" attached.

Along with increased time, two participants in this study felt that the writers themselves needed to possess a certain level of tact, commitment, and emotional maturity if computer conferencing was to succeed.

Finally, let me cite an immediately observable and fairly obvious condition necessary for computer conferences to succeed: an increase in the number of computers available to the students during the hours a centrally located computer lab is open to them.

"OCCASIONAL PAPERS"

The Teachers' Network News, a publication of the Harvard Teachers' Network, announced plans to provide teachers with a means to share their ideas and experiences. Teachers may submit papers to the Network and the available titles will appear in the monthly *TNN* under "Occasional Papers." For more information on how to submit papers, on how to request copies of papers listed, or on how to obtain a subscription to *TNN*, contact Bobby Ann Starnes, editor, *TNN*, Larsen Hall-Appian Way, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138.

CANDIDATES FOR ASSOCIATE CHAIR

MYLES D. ELEY, English Department Chair/teacher, Warren Central High School, Indianapolis. **Offices:** CSSEDC Program Chair, 1984; Executive Committee, CSSEDC 1984–87; CSSEDC Membership Chair, 1986–present. **Member:** ICTE, ETCI, NCTE, CSSEDC, NASSP, ISSA, ASCD, MSD Warren Advisory Committee, WCHS Instructional Cabinet. **Publications:** Mythology package, Sundance Insight package (author); articles in *CSSEDC Quarterly, Hoosier Schoolmaster*. **Awards:** Two NDEA grants; CEEB grant, advanced study in language arts; John Peter Zenger Award, contribution to student press. **Program Participant:** NCTE, 1981–88; CSSEDC 1983–88; state English conferences; NASSP Convention, 1987.

Position Statement: Improved communication skills for the 1990s and beyond must be the focus for English instruction. CSSEDC, in its leadership capacity, must play a key role in assuring that these skills are taught. Thus, as its members, we must commit ourselves to "leadership for excellence." I shall dedicate my efforts to encourage and implement actions which will uphold CSSEDC and its goals.

DONALD J. STEPHAN, English Department Chair/teacher, Sidney High School. **Offices:** Member-at-Large, Executive Committee CSSEDC; member, Executive Committee, Western Ohio CTE. **Member:** NCTE, CSSEDC, OCTELA, WOTELA, NEA, OEA, WOEA, SEA, and ASCD. **Publications:** *Advanced Composition, An American I. D.*, and *Prewriting and Revising*, Published by W. T. Brown, Iowa. **Awards:** 1984 Sidney Education Association Teacher of the Year; 20-year member of Ohio Council of Teachers of English. **Program Participant:** 1987 NCTE Spring Conferences; Washington CSSEDC Conference.

Position Statement: Since department chairs and other leaders in English education often occupy a lonely position, we need leaders in CSSEDC who can share solace, expertise, and inspiration. From my 25 years in English education on all levels (elementary through college) and as a department chairperson for 12 years, I shall strive to provide that service.

CANDIDATES FOR MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

IRA HAYES, Supervisor of English, Syosset High School, New York. **Offices:** Secretary, NY State English Council; President, Long Island Language Arts Council; formerly President, NY City Association of Assistant Principals, Supervision, English. **Member:** NCTE, ASCD, IRA. **Publications:** Articles in *English Journal*, ERIC publications. **Awards:** Two NEH grants. **Program Participant:** NCTE, CSSEDC, NYSEC, LILAC, NYCAABE, Hofstra, Columbia, NY State Education Department, SUNY, CUNY.

Position Statement: Cuts in education often occur in the area of supervisory personnel and curriculum specialists. What a tragic occurrence! Fortunately, CSSEDC believes that the English department supervisor, not the assistant superintendent or principal, has the know-how and desire necessary to deliver a superior English program. The supervisor must be provided with time needed for building such a program. CSSEDC also offers us an opportunity to think of the broader issues of education. It reminds us that professionally we are not as alone as we think we are.

SUSAN HAYLES-BERBOWER, Language Arts Facilitator, Huntington Beach Union High School District, California. **Member:** NCTE, CSSEDC, NEA, CTA, DEA, Orange County CTE, OCDE Language Arts Council. **Publications:** *Test of Everyday Writing Skills; Language Arts Proficiency Book;* district writing assessments, rubrics, courses of study (9–12). **Program Participant:** Vancouver Council of Teachers of English, Washington State University, Orange County Department of Education, HBUHSD English Workshop Series.

Position Statement: As a teacher and as curriculum facilitator for 150 reading, English, and ESL teachers, I know that instructional leadership is the chairperson's most vital role. To break down those isolating four walls of the classroom—to bring

teachers together regularly to share strategies, to discuss standards of education, and to hone skills—is a challenging responsibility. CSSEDC must provide support for those charged with bringing about reform in the teaching of English.

DOROTHY McCROSSEN, English Department Chairperson, Ottawa High School, Kansas. **Offices:** Nominating Committee, Secondary Section, NCTE, 1987–88; formerly Executive Committee, Kansas Association of Teachers of English. **Member:** Comprehensive NCTE; Phi Delta Kappa; NEA; Kansas Association of Teachers of English; Kansas Association of Teacher Educators. **Publications:** Articles for Kansas Department of Education; curriculum for denominational press. **Awards:** Kansas Master Teacher 1985; NEH grant for American Studies, 1980, 1981; NHH grant for work in humanities, 1983. **Program Participant:** NCTE general sessions; CSSEDC conferences; various state and local workshops.

Position Statement: CSSEDC needs to continue its support, encouragement, and stimulation for those of us who combine heavy teaching loads with departmental assignments.

DEBORAH SMITH McCULLAR, Language Arts Department Chairperson, Dean Morgan Junior High School, Caspar, Wyoming. **Offices:** CSSEDC Program Chair, St. Louis; Cochair, Wyoming Teachers Forum. **Member:** NCTE, WATE, CLAS. **Publications:** Published writer. **Program Participant:** NCTE, CSSEDC, CLAS.

Position Statement: Because educational reform is a major national concern, CSSEDC needs to continue its emphasis on leadership issues—the issues teachers face when they become involved in decision-making, the risks they take when they do not. Educational reform should be based on what educators know to be true, not what those outside education believe to be. We need to emphasize what we know about the issues students face which either impede or contribute to their success in school. Through increased awareness of our organization, I envision increased prestige for CSSEDC among educational institutions. When skills, talents, knowledge and experience are combined, who better to effect reform than the collective membership of CSSEDC—the segment of NCTE that provides leadership to secondary English teachers.

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In This Issue

COMPUTER LABS FOR ENGLISH, PART TWO

by James Strickland, editor

This is the second issue of the *Quarterly* dedicated to "Computer Labs for English." After I had finished editing the October 1988 issue, I realized I had received enough well-written manuscripts to continue the discussion in the next issue. Manuscripts continue to arrive, so I must admit the discussion about computers in English classrooms could go on indefinitely. It is encouraging to me to see that we, as a profession, seem to spend a great deal of time and ink considering productive and innovative ways to use the computer. My hope is that department chairpersons will use the *Quarterly* as a focus of discussion for the first department meeting of the new year, and that they will encourage the teachers in their department to try the ideas presented here. I also hope they and their faculty will, in turn, write the articles for next year's *Quarterly*.

The first article is written by Dr. Nancy Traubitz, an English Resource Teacher at Springbrook High School in Silver Springs, Maryland. Nancy's article discusses the evolution of her department's use of a computer lab for English classes. She presents, in a charming and practical series of "twenty questions," the most common, day-to-day problems that department chairs and faculty must face when going "high-tech."

The second article is written by Kaye Jordan, the chairperson of the English department of Spring High School on Highway 75 in Spring, Texas. Kaye's article describes the benefits she and other English teachers in her department have realized from teaching their students to use the Writer's Workbench style-checker.

The third article is written by Dr. David H. Roberts, a good friend I look forward to seeing each year at the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Dave has just taken a new position with Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama, but was previously the director of Composition at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg and the director of the South Mississippi Writing Project. When I learned Dave was writing a guide for teachers who wished to use computers to teach writing, I asked him to write an article containing practical techniques that require very little technical expertise to use. He chose three of his most successful techniques for creating a sense of community for writers, two of which use the computer in the classroom.

The fourth article is written by Joyce S. Howe, the chairperson of the English department of North High School, in Downers Grove, Illinois. Joyce describes a semester-long project evaluating the integration of computers, specifically word processing, into the teaching of writing for tenth graders. She reports success: growth in areas such as organization, support, and focus, and growth in composition measured holistically. In addition to the report, Joyce appends some lessons learned along the way, hints to be passed on to chairpersons and faculty interested in trying her approach.

I'm glad I continued this discussion.

Inside... **page number**

Twenty Questions about the Department Computer Lab
by Nancy Traubitz **2**

Success With Writer's Workbench
by Kaye Jordan **3**

Creating a Community of Writers
by David H. Roberts **4**

An Experiment With Computers and Composition
by Joyce S. Howe **5**

Call for Manuscripts **7**

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TWENTY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT COMPUTER LAB

by Nancy Traubitz
Springbrook High School, Silver Springs, Maryland

Like most large high schools, we had been toying with word processing for several years. We had fourteen unassigned computers clustered in a storage closet, the overflow from the real lab installations. During the scattered class periods when computer science and math classes were not being held there, intrepid English teachers hiked just under a half mile to these "extra" computers and camped out while students took turns typing and printing out their compositions. The department got a reputation as itinerant workers; students began calling themselves "migrant writers." Small classes did show all the enthusiasm and improvement we had been led to expect from word processing, but for our regular classes of twenty-eight students, we saw little improvement in writing and much loss of instructional time. We never feared computers would replace us as classroom teachers. We never believed the availability of word processing would magically change students into expert writers. However, we did believe word processing was a powerful tool for all levels of writers, ourselves included.

When we learned we would have a word-processing installation—twenty-eight computers, seven printers, storage and office space—we expected things were going to change for the better, if for no other reason than that the lab would be in the general area of the English classrooms. And because of our experience as pseudo typing teachers or perhaps closet computer teachers, we even thought we knew what we were doing when equipment, discarded from serious computer science programs, started to arrive—computers, printers, networking control boxes, miles of cables, boxes of paper, notebooks of software, snowstorms of memoranda and questionnaires from the central office. Looking back, we realize we had no idea what we were doing! We did not even know the right questions to ask. Now in our second year, we are still searching for answers. However, we have clarified the questions—not how to retrieve or boot or byte or how to perform those wonderful arabesques at the keyboard that our students learned a decade ago—but how to remain the master English teachers we have always been—while using our wonderful new tools.

Questions to Answer before Students and Teachers Begin to Use the Lab or "What do you mean, 'Word processing'?"

1. Which English classes get to use the "English" computer lab?

   Writing classes should have priority. In our system all students in grades 9 and 11 are expected to word process at least four compositions, both narrative and explanatory writing. Juniors are expected to word process a research essay.

2. What does an English computer lab look like? What furniture will we need and where will we put it? What about the books and coats students always carry with them? Should the students face the teacher?

   Although we feared losing eye contact with our students, we placed the computers around the outside of the room, four computers and one printer for every two tables. To keep the cords and paper away from stretched-out student limbs, cords were fastened underneath the tables, and paper was stored on the tables under printer stands. In the center of the room we created a work island of chairs and tables large enough for students to cluster around at the beginning of class. Books, coats, and anything not directly related to the writing task stayed on the center island.

3. Will all English teachers be expected to use the lab?

   All twenty teachers taught at least one section of either grade 9 or grade 11, the grades where our system places semester-length writing classes. We went through the trauma of introducing a new group of teachers to word processing in September and again in February. After the initial outrage and panic, we agreed this on-the-job training was one of the wisest decisions we made.

4. What additional equipment will English classes need in the computer lab? How about an overhead projector, a movie projector, screens, and outlets in addition to those needed for word-processing equipment?

   We mounted two screens in the room, one at the front behind the teacher's desk, one on the opposite wall. A chalkless board also provided an excellent surface for projecting student work from the computer, for using the overhead projector, or for showing films. We used all the traditional equipment as well as the computers.

5. What about storage for dictionaries, reference books, class sets of grammar books, student disks, and student composition folders? What about secure storage for software, new disks, and boxes of paper?

   Each teacher received a personal disk storage box for use with all classes. Student disks did not leave the lab and students were not allowed to bring any disks or personal software into the lab. Lockable file cabinets were part of our initial installation. Because the teacher's desk in the lab was used by several teachers each day, we made a special effort to keep it stocked with the routine necessities. We kept a class set of dictionaries and thesauruses in the room. Over the year we experienced no pilfering.

6. Who "owns" the lab? Who secures the lab? Who sets the alarm system? Who sees to letting in building service workers to clean? Who has the key?

   The department chair and, if possible, the lab assistant should "own" the lab. This is not a responsibility for an individual teacher unless compensation is provided.

7. When lucky enough to have them, where do we house the assistants?

   We give them office space in or adjacent to the lab, when possible, and thus provide two important benefits: ego enhancement for important personnel and "ownership" of the lab, with all the responsibility that entails.

8. What happens to the master schedule? How do we arrange to get all the writing classes into the lab? What happens to the skills-level writing classes, the journalism and advanced writing electives?

   The writing classes that all students take to graduate must always receive priority in the lab. Our experience suggests that teachers should have no more than three writing classes per semester and at least two writing classes during the year in which a department begins word processing.

9. How do we distribute the resources of the system: the composition assistants, the media center materials necessary for research essays, the reading teacher and resource room staff?

   We always worked on the principle of the greatest good for the largest number of students, while adhering carefully to school policy and the law. In fairness, we did decide that only one teacher—three writing classes—can work on the research essay each month.

10. How does word processing in English classes influence the "real" computer classes such as computer science and business?

There appears to be less interest in programming courses and a greater insistence on keyboarding as opposed to traditional typing classes.

Questions to Answer as We Use the Lab or "Are we in the lab today?"

11. Does every English teacher need two classrooms?

Yes, unless every English teacher has a word-processing installation on every student desk and the lab as a separate work space is no longer necessary. Until then, a sign on the door becomes very important to tell students and all other interested parties (for example, the student who has been absent all week) that the class which regularly meets in this classroom is in the computer lab.

12. How much time will be lost from writing instruction just getting into the lab and learning to use the equipment?

Our experience suggests almost none.

13. What will happen to the instruction in vocabulary, research skills, reading and speaking?

We found very little in the curriculum was lost. However, because so many classes use the lab, all the information about routine classwork had to be clearly written out and maintained in the regular classroom. Students working in the lab often dropped by their classroom to read the ongoing assignments on the chalkboard. Teachers also used the overhead in the lab to keep a record of ongoing assignments. Since several classes used the lab the same day, transparencies with the individual teacher's name and the class period became essential resources for students who needed to be reminded what was due when. We also posted a large, clearly displayed calendar in the lab showing which teacher was scheduled to use the lab during which class period each day. This schedule was a helpful reminder for both teachers and students.

14. Will students actually draft compositions at the computer? Why not do the rough draft in the classroom? The planning sheet, at least?

The problem here centers on the idea of saving computer time. Students must compose at the computer. Otherwise, we're teaching typing. If an entire class falls behind, students finish their compositions by hand. One class cannot bump the next scheduled class, even if school has been closed for two weeks because of snow.

15. Will students plagiarize? Will they copy other students' disks? What do we do about electronic cheats?

We confronted this problem immediately with our students. We established a policy: cheats are thieves. They fail the assignment, and often they fail the class. We had very little trouble with this because we did not allow students to remove their disks from the lab. If no disks can be brought into the lab or taken from the lab, less "stealing" occurs.

Questions Teachers, Students and Our Parent Community Continue to Ask as We Evaluate Student Progress or "Did you get an 'A'?"

16. What about students who are absent?

Our lab is open before school and after school. We allowed students three days after the assignment was due to complete it in the lab. After that the students were allowed to finish the draft in longhand under the teacher's supervision. We found it important to make clear that the assistants would grade no more than five late papers. Teachers, not assistants, supervised and graded late work. Students may always write essays in longhand in a teacher-supervised makeup session.

17. What about the student who does not type?

Teachers must realize students who don't want to type need not type. Teachers who insisted students must word process compositions or even implied word processing influenced composition grades caused serious trouble for students and for themselves.

18. What about preparation and remediation for system- and/or state-mandated tests?

We have no hard data yet, but so far the use of word processing has not contributed to any marked improvement in test scores except in the case of learning-disabled students.

19. What about writing for other classes in the English lab?

We have filled the lab so full of English classes that other disciplines have not been scheduled into our space. When students finish their compositions, they work with other students, reading over their shoulders, improving their writing. Peer evaluation and webbing have taken new and vital forms in the lab.

20. What about students who have really incorporated word processing into their writing and find themselves at the end of the semester forced back into "writing by hand?"

We could keep two labs busy every class period every day. We could open the lab at six in the morning and run it, filled with students, far into the night. At the end of our first year, we asked three sections of on-level grade 11 students if word processing had changed their writing. Many students insisted that the computer had not changed their writing at all. However, they did list very specific reasons why they should be allowed to use the computer lab in every class every day: the ease of revision ("I can see what's wrong . . . . The spelling-checker really helps."); the speed of revision ("I just hit the delete key."); the organization ("I have a better awareness of how much I have written."); the relief ("I never worry about my handwriting anymore."); the pleasure of neatness as opposed to the clutter of composition folders, notebooks, paper scraps, bibliography and note cards; and the quiet class ("Everybody worked.").

As we look toward next year, we have one additional question. Is it time yet to toss out those composition folders and simply pass along the students' disks to their next year's English teacher? Our answer is "no, not yet," but we can see that day coming.

SUCCESS WITH WRITER'S WORKBENCH

by Kaye Jordan
Spring High School, Texas

Two years ago, the two high schools in the Spring Independent School District launched an exciting computer project for eleventh and twelfth grade students. At first, we were as skeptical as many other English teachers, believing that the "machine" would control our students' writing. However, as we evaluated program after program, one system stood out: Writer's Workbench, by AT&T, a hard-disk system that evaluates writing. From the moment we selected it, enthusiasm for the program spread from teacher to student to parent.

Writer's Workbench is unique among other style-checker programs because ownership of the written work always lies in the hands of the student. Students begin by writing a rough draft of

an essay, typing it into the computer. Then they request an analysis by Writer's Workbench and receive a printout from the computer, analyzing everything from organization to passive voice to sentence structure. The printout also contains a list of misspelled words, vague words, and abstract words found in their essays. Writer's Workbench also provides a percentage indicating the type of sentence openers used in the paper and grade-level readability numbers based on selected reading scales. In addition to all the other aids, a number appears at the end of the analysis that all teachers seem to appreciate—the word count.

Once students have this analysis in hand, they begin revising and editing both as individuals and in groups. Their teachers have previously taken the time to show the students how to interpret the various sections of the analysis. After carefully reading through each section of the analysis, they begin the marking and changing. Students also use a glossary provided by the system to make decisions as to usage and word choice. They eagerly mark their own papers and confer with other students. The room becomes abuzz with student talk, a sharing that leads to improved essays.

When observing this sharing and enthusiasm, I have sensed a difference in students as they attack a paper that the computer has analyzed. Students work with sincere interest to improve the grammar and content of their essays. Ideally, this should happen each time an essay is written, but realistically, this is not so. As a teacher and an observer, I have asked myself what has made the difference. I believe that seeing their papers in print, knowing that an objective third party (the computer) has done the analysis, and having specific suggestions in front of them have all contributed to the students' desire to improve.

As their teacher, I have enjoyed the role of clarifier and assistant. I no longer feel responsible for noticing errors in rough drafts, for the burden lies on the student, as it should. Writer's Workbench labels "possible" errors and calls upon the student to make the final judgment. Students are also more willing to rewrite, revise, and edit papers because, when they correct their papers, they are anxious to see "what the computer has to say about it this time."

After developing lesson plans that support using Writer's Workbench to teach the writing process, I look forward to the days when we work with "Kron" (our school nickname for the system). The other teachers and I have even noticed students coming before and after school to put in a paper for which we were not scheduled to use the computer. What began as a computer lab to be used by junior and senior English classes has developed into a computer lab that works to capacity from 6:30 a.m. until the last teacher in the department has to lock up in the afternoon. "English teacher-student friendly"—that's our Writer's Workbench by AT&T.

CREATING A COMMUNITY OF WRITERS

by David H. Roberts
Samford University

Teachers and students in a classroom who share their writing with one another create a community of writers. Such a community provides support for developing writers in an atmosphere of tolerance and acceptance, regardless of varying skill levels, and provides opportunities for growth not found in other writing atmospheres.

Three exercises I've used successfully to create a community of writers are interviews, "keyboard konversations," and chain paragraphs.

Interviews

I begin creating the community on the first day by asking students to introduce the person sitting next to them. I allow about three to five minutes for paired students to briefly interview one another and then to write a few notes about that person, and I participate fully in this get-to-know-you time by including myself in the pairing.

The information that is shared does not have to be any more personal than a name and place of birth, but it may include something significant from the person's background. I sometimes ask the students to volunteer one item of information about them that they want the class to know, making it easier for the interviewer. Last semester, one student bragged that he was pledging a certain fraternity; another volunteered that he hated English and enrolled in the class under duress. One student wanted all the females in the class to know his phone number; another volunteered that she didn't want his phone number because she had his "number." Still another student wanted the class to know that she was a born-again Christian, eager to talk with anyone about her religious experiences.

Whatever information is shared, a sense of community begins to develop. That sense of community is so beneficial to the improvement of writing during the semester that written evaluations of my classes invariably include some mention of the new friendships the students made during the semester. Students openly share drafts of papers, talk about possible writing topics, make honest evaluations of one another's writing, and provide a real audience for the writer. As the sense of community strengthens, a level of trust develops among the members of the class. The students trust each other to read their drafts and to offer the best advice they know how to offer. (Not all the advice is sound, though, and students quickly discover who gives the best advice.)

Keyboard Konversations

Another technique for developing a community of writers is to use the computer to have students engage in "keyboard konversations," a classroom activity I learned from a colleague at the University of Southern Mississippi. Two students share a computer screen and keyboard while they write to each other. Their conversation is light and personal, free from the constraints of other classrooms.

A keyboard konversation during a freshman composition class might begin like this:

S1: So, what the heck are we supposed to write about?

S2: I don't know. What did you do last night?

S1: Actually, I was delirious from working all night, then I stayed up until 3:30 like a stupid idiot.

S2: Where do you work at?

S1: Oh, I work at Vinny's Pizza.

S2: I know why your asking me all these questions, because you have too.

S1: have too? It's have to. And I don't have to, I'm just doing the assignment. Lose the attitude. What's your major?

S2: I'm going into Physical Therapy. I hear you make alot a money in that. What's your major?

S1: That's a good question. I don't know what I want to major in. But I wouldn't go into something just to make money.

S2: How long have you been in college?

S1: I just started last semester.

S2: No wonder you don't know. Look the whole point of being here is to get out and get a big money job.

S1: I think I'd rather do something that I like, something that makes me feel good about myself.

S2: Well, my father always says the only thing that matters is money. If you got it, you'll feel good.

Keyboard konversations are informal, unfinished pieces of writing, directed at an audience other than the writer. Since the text is read by someone else, many writers begin by being self-conscious about spelling and mechanics, which is natural, but I try not to allow it to interfere with the meaning of the dialogue. The two writers in the example were just beginning to have a dialogue about the purpose of education, a topic that grew out of their conversation. These keyboard konversations build confidence in the student's own ability to write and help the student learn to share in a community of writers.

Chain Paragraphs

Chain paragraphing is another exercise that can be done with a computer to strengthen a sense of community. In *Open to Language* (Oxford, 1982), Pat Hartwell says that chain paragraphing helps students build an awareness of coherence in their writing, a frequent problem with developing writers because they do not rescan their text effectively. What little rescanning they do seems to focus on fixing errors; chain paragraphs can help students see the importance of rescanning for coherence.

Here's how it works. Each student begins a paragraph by writing the opening sentence at the computer. The exercise seems to work best if a common topic is assigned. I assign the opening phrase of the topic sentence, something like, "I used to have a best friend, but since . . . ." Everyone completes the first sentence and moves to the left keyboard and writes the second sentence, striving for coherence in the paragraph. After writing another sentence, the students move to the left again to write another sentence, and so forth, until the paragraph is 7 or 8 sentences long. Students then read some of the paragraphs aloud and the class comments on the effectiveness of the writing and makes some judgments about the coherence of the paragraph. I try to center the discussion on each writer's need to read the text that was produced so far in order to know where the paragraph is headed. Rescanning the emerging text keeps the writer's thoughts focused on the topic and creates coherence in the text.

Several variations on chain paragraphs work well. Teams can compete with each other, each trying to write the chain paragraph with the greatest coherence. Students can move randomly around the computer room, stopping to add text to any paragraph they choose, instead of having to add text to the paragraph at the next workstation.

All types of paragraph structures and all modes of discourse can be illustrated and taught through the use of chain paragraphs. Coordinating and subordinating sequence sentences in a paragraph can also be taught and illustrated with chain paragraphs. After explaining the different levels of abstraction within a paragraph and providing examples, students can be instructed to add sentences that follow specific patterns illustrated in class. Paragraph structure can also be emphasized with chain paragraph exercises, by beginning with an appropriate topic sentence and asking each student to add a necessary sentence to create the paragraph structure being illustrated.

One advantage of working with chain paragraphs, a kind of collaborative composing, is that all texts become public texts, and no person feels on display when sharing a text. A sense of community can be enhanced through chain paragraphs and other types of collaborative composing.

The Community

Writing improves quickly when a community of writers develops, and I am sure that techniques other than those I've mentioned can be found to create a community of writers. Whatever the technique, teachers and students must all write. Writing teachers who write with their students show those students three things: writing in the classroom is as important to the teacher as it is to the student, teachers as well as students struggle with writing, and expert and novice alike can learn through writing. Regardless of the subject or the discipline, teachers who write with their students and share their writings show the importance of writing as part of the learning process in their discipline and cannot help but foster learning within a community of writers.

[Note: The author wishes to thank the South Mississippi Writing Project teacher/consultants for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper. An earlier version of this paper is published as part of the author's *A Guide to Computer Aided Writing Instruction*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1988).]

AN EXPERIMENT WITH COMPUTERS AND COMPOSITION

by Joyce S. Howe
North High School, Downers Grove, Illinois

A month after our school opened its computer lab in January 1987, I began a project with my three one-semester sophomore English classes to teach the rudiments of using word processing to write compositions. My goals were twofold: to offer the students the advantages of using the computer to write their compositions and to measure any improvement using the recently developed Illinois Integrated Holistic/Analytic Rating Scale, a scale measuring growth in organization, support, and focus, three areas that recent writing research indicates can be taught. In addition, I decided to measure the students' reaction to the project with a final survey to determine the degree of value they placed on the project's activities.

The Project

During the first half of the semester, I scheduled 15 to 18 class periods in the computer lab. These class periods were spread over a period of six weeks. I also asked the students to come into the lab, where I had arranged to be present during study halls and before and after school.

Two assignments were used as my pre-and posttests to measure writing improvement. I had the students write an impromptu assignment the second day of class and gave them a comparable impromptu at the end of the semester. I measured these assignments on the six-point Illinois Scale, a scale concerned with writing development in four major areas: focus, organization, support, and conventions. Focus is the degree to which the idea/theme or point of view is clear and maintained. Organization is the degree to which logical flow of ideas and explicitness of the plan are clear. Support is the degree to which main points/elements are elaborated and explained by evidence and detailed reasons. Finally, conventions refer to the degree to which the conventions of standard English are used: usage, sentence construction, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and so forth. I spent a great deal of time teaching the scale to students so that they could use it to evaluate their own writing, as well as that of other students, throughout the semester.

My three classes consisted of regular sophomores; our remedial and gifted students are in separate classes. I had a total of

75 students, and my highest class enrollment was 28. There were 15 Apple IIe computers available in the lab and a demonstration computer with two video monitors. I used Appleworks Word Processing, for which I prepared my own brief handout with the necessary commands and gave one copy to each student. I did not give them any instructions before going into the lab. Instead, I relied on the handout with the printed Appleworks commands and the video monitors for demonstration. I won't claim it was easy, but I was pleased with the results, considering that Appleworks is not the easiest program to learn. Next time, I would do more preteaching before going into the lab.

The first two days were chaos. I had 28 hands up all at once. But by the third day, students were on their own and I could help with what they were writing rather than with the word processing. After six periods in the computer lab, my students had written two assignments on the computer and were familiar with the basic commands. Their writing was saved on disks they purchased for their own use in the lab. We printed students' work whenever we wanted—for evaluation, for editing, or for recognition. They gave me their hard copies to read.

The two initial assignments consisted of a short precis of a selection they had already read and an earlier composition that I had already critiqued and graded. Students were required to type these compositions and submit both for a second grade. While I have always allowed my students to revise and resubmit all compositions, not many students chose to go through the effort of totally rewriting their assignment. But on the computer, they discovered that revision was completely different. As long as they were entering the composition on the disk anyway, they discovered how easy it was to insert additional support, add a conclusion, insert transitions, and—wonder of wonders—check their typing (and spelling) with the spell-checker. And they were willing to do not one, but many revisions. It was as simple as typing the "Print" command. Thereafter, I was reading stacks of hard-copy printouts for the rest of the semester. On the final evaluation, 90 percent of the students ranked the opportunity to rewrite essays for a second grade as "very valuable" or "somewhat valuable." The second highest ranking was the comment concerning the opportunity to revise assignments on the computer; some 88 percent ranked this feature as "very valuable" or "somewhat valuable."

Teaching three classes in the lab each day is physically exhausting. I was on my feet, up and down, bending over, and sometimes actually jogging over to a distressed student. After my three classes finished two assignments in the computer lab, I made a decision. I only scheduled time for two classes in the lab, allowing the third class the option to do their next composition in longhand or on the computer if they could come in on their own time. Then, I brought all three classes back into the lab for one, last, required writing assignment midway through the semester. Since the students were familiar with the word processing by this time, the schedule was not as much of a strain on me.

For the last required computer essay, I collected all the disks and, after grading these papers, I chose the best papers and printed class sets from the disks onto a ditto.

The Results

Did the students make any gains? Yes, I think so based on my pre- and posttest assessments. As I compared the students' first writing sample with the second, I immediately noticed that the students wrote longer papers with clear divisions into paragraphs. While I did not teach the students that their papers had to be any specific number of paragraphs, I did teach that their papers must have a clear focus and be supported in subordinate paragraphs. I taught the students to have a minimum of three paragraphs, depending on their focus. In the pretest, 38 percent of the students had written a one paragraph response. In the posttest, these same students, depending on their focus, wrote four or five paragraph essays. In addition, 93 percent of all students wrote multiparagraph essays with obvious transitions and longer paragraphs of support.

Comparing the two writing assignments from my students, I was able to measure growth holistically and to do so on the three areas of organization, support, and focus. I did not measure conventions because scores in this area, using a plus or minus grade, are not easily quantifiable. The holistic score was not computed as a numerical average of the four different areas of organization, support, focus, and conventions. Rather, the holistic score was the "gestalt," or overall impression, of the paper. The results of the posttest show an 83 percent gain in the student's writing in the areas of organization and support, with smaller gains in focus and growth measured holistically.

The students did improve their holistic scores. A total of 37 percent of my students improved their holistic scores by one, two, or three scale points. However, as mentioned before, the most dramatic improvement was in organization and support. In both areas, 83 percent showed gains of one, two, three, or four scale points. On the final evaluation, 88 percent of the students valued the revision capacity of the computer; 82 percent valued writing their assignments on the computer; and a surprising 90 percent valued and used the opportunity to rewrite assignments on the computer. As they told me in their comments, "It was better to correct than rewrite the whole thing; . . . I was able to see my organization and spelling; . . . it is easier to correct your mistakes."

In conclusion, I feel that the computer has real potential to help students organize and develop their writing. I will continue with this unit as time is available in the lab. This year we expect to have more teachers available to supervise students during their free time, encouraging more students to come in, as they did for me, to work on their writing assignments.

Helpful Hints

For anyone who wishes to borrow any part of my experiment, I have prepared a list of some of the lessons that I learned during the semester. I hope that my project helps others as they work with computers and composition.

1. Make sure students have their own disks before going into the lab. Our bookstore sold the correct disks for our machines. If you relent and let them bring what they think will work, you will be sorry. I was.
2. Format disks for students ahead of time. I wish I had done this. I would have saved a day's time.
3. Tell students to help each other. There are always some experts. Use them.
4. Stagger time in the lab for your classes. Don't bring all your classes into the lab on the same days unless you have the strength of Hercules.
5. Have students sign out word-processing programs. Otherwise students will leave programs in the machines or walk out with the programs by accident or by design.
6. Put extra hardware and software away. Our industrial arts classes left "mouse" attachments on the machines. Sometime during my class period, small balls that are part of the "mice" disappeared. This was the only vandalism we ex-

perienced and, although we believe the balls were taken as a prank, this could have been avoided.

7. Have students write their assignments out in longhand before they come to the lab. While I had a few who could compose on the machine, most did better when they were ready to go with their assignments. However, this does not apply to revision. Once the assignment is on the computer, the student can revise directly on the machine.
8. Have the students write assignments on the computer that are related to their regular class reading and writing. I found the precis worked especially well.
9. Don't excuse students who claim they have different computers at home. I required all students to learn Appleworks anyway. However, I did let them turn in assignments on their own machines.
10. Spell-checkers are invaluable for the students. We had two different spell-checkers, Megaworks and Webster's. One gave the students correct spellings, the other did not. Students preferred the Webster's, which gave the spellings, but Megaworks flagged more words. In addition, both gave word counts. I told the students that if their paper was less than 300 words, it did not have enough support. The students knew they would have to increase the length of support. Better spellers used the spell-checkers as proof readers. Even though they knew the correct spelling, they often missed mistakes on the screen. Extremely poor spellers found the Webster's a lifesaver and told me so on their final evaluations.
11. Don't worry about typing skills. Hunt-and-peck works when all else fails. The students manage to get their typed work on the disk.
12. Use ID numbers on student writing. Keep the writer anonymous. It helped me to grade more objectively and it certainly helped the students when they read each other's papers.
13. Use the student disks to make multiple copies of compositions for your classes to read, edit, and revise. You can print the composition on a ditto and duplicate as needed.
14. Keep the students' disks in a safe place. I learned the hard way. If students carry the disks in their folders, the disks will get damaged and bent. You will avoid the disappointment and anger that comes when students discover that all their writing is destroyed.
15. Invite the students into the lab at other times of the day. You will be surprised how many take advantage. I offered some extra credit at first, but this was soon unnecessary. I was able to work with smaller groups and these same students, in turn, helped others during lab periods when I was busy.
16. Students can read and evaluate their own compositions once they are printed on the computer. They told me they could identify their organizational patterns—introductory paragraph, conclusion, transitions, and paragraph length—more readily on the printouts than in longhand.

CALLS FOR MANUSCRIPTS—PLANS FOR FUTURE ISSUES

The *CSSEDC Quarterly*, a publication of the Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons of NCTE, seeks articles of 250 to 3,000 words on topics of interest to English department leaders. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are encouraged.

Recent surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: encouraging leadership within the department, evaluating teachers and curriculum, and implementing change. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In addition, upcoming issues will have these themes:

May 1989 (February 1 deadline):
High School-College Articulation

October 1989 (July 1 deadline):
Research in the Classroom: Projects, Plans, Procedures

December 1989 (September 15 deadline):
Student Teacher Training Programs

February 1990 (November 1 deadline):
Advanced Placement vs. Senioritis

Address articles and inquiries to: James Strickland, Editor, *CSSEDC Quarterly*, English Department, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, 16057-1326.

THE WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER

The Writing Lab Newsletter is an informal monthly publication for those who direct or tutor in writing labs and language skills centers. Articles, announcements, columns, and reviews of materials focus on topics in tutoring writing. For those who wish to join the newsletter group, a yearly donation of $7.50 (U.S. $12.50/yr. for Canadians) to defray printing and mailing costs would be appreciated. Please make checks payable to Purdue University. Send requests to join, checks, and manuscripts for the newsletter to: Muriel Harris, Editor, *Writing Lab Newsletter*, Department of English, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana 47907.

SHAKESPEARE AT THE FOLGER

The Folger Institute Center for Shakespeare Studies is pleased to announce its 1989 summer humanities institute supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. "The Problem of an Intellectual History for Shakespeare's Age" will run for seven weeks from 13 June to 28 July, 1989.

Leeds Barroll, Professor of English at the University of Maryland at Baltimore County, will direct "The Problem of an Intellectual History for Shakespeare's Age" which will investigate the ways in which a history of ideas can be undertaken today.

The institute will be a group revaluation of development, stasis, and change in the relation of intellectual theory to practice in England from 1480 to 1642. Members of the program will be concerned with identifying—or reconsidering the existence of—Renaissance philosophical, political, economic, and scientific theories. But they will also deal with the ideologies to be inferred from English activity in commerce, politics, physical and psychological medicine, music, literature, drama, and the plastic arts. Participants will have frequent recourse to the holdings of the Folger Library, both to the "received texts" and to the manuscripts, pamphlets, and ephemera that can comprise a new "intellectual history" of the period.

"The Problem of an Intellectual History for Shakespeare's Age" is open only to postdoctoral scholars. Enrollment will be largely limited to those eligible to receive N.E.H. support to attend the program. The Folger Institute will award fifteen $3,000 stipends funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. A few places may be available for independent scholars and for faculty members of colleges and universities outside the United

States who are able to participate without stipend support; they are accordingly welcome to apply to attend.

For application forms, interested scholars should write Lena Cowen Orlin, The Folger Institute, The Folger Shakespeare Library, 201 East Capitol Street, S.E., Washington, DC 20003, or call (202) 544-4600. The deadline for applications is 1 March 1989.

NCTE ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS IN WRITING, 1989

To encourage high school students in their writing and to recognize publicly some of the best student writers in the nation, the National Council of Teachers of English will give achievement awards in writing to over 800 students who will graduate from high school in 1990. This marks the thirty-second consecutive year that NCTE has sponsored the Achievement Awards. The National Association of Secondary School Principals has placed the program on its advisory list of national contests and activities for 1988–89.

1989 Schedule and Deadlines

January 23 Deadline for schools to return nomination blanks to NCTE, one blank for each nominee. *Only nomination blanks are to be submitted at this time, no compositions.* Nomination blanks postmarked after January 23, 1989, may be disqualified.

March NCTE mails the impromptu theme topic and further instructions to the teachers specified on the nomination blanks.

April 21 Deadline for teachers to mail nominees' impromptu themes and samples of best writing to their state coordinators. Both compositions are to be sent in one package. Names and addresses of state coordinators are included with the instructions sent to teachers in March. These materials are *not* to be sent to NCTE.

August 1 State coordinators report results to NCTE.

October NCTE announces the awards. Winners and their high school principals are notified by mail. Nominees who did not place in the competition are sent letters acknowledging their participation in the program.

Please note: teachers are not notified, *only students*.

Queries

Address queries to Achievement Awards in Writing, National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

CSSEDC ELECTION RESULTS

Winners of the CSSEDC election were announced at the 1988 CSSEDC Conference in St. Louis. Myles Eley, English Department Chair/teacher, Warren Central High School, Indianapolis, Indiana, was elected Associate Chair. Also, Ira Hayes, Supervisor of English, Syosset High School, Syosset, New York, and Deborah Smith McCullar, Language Arts Department Chairperson, Dean Morgan Junior High School, Casper, Wyoming, were elected Members-at-Large. Congratulations to the winners and thanks to all the other candidates.

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